

ANIMATION

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# Anime Anime Anime

**Manga Goes  
For The  
Mainstream**

**Background  
Briefings by  
Jerry Beck  
Fred Patten**



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# EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

I must admit that I have not always been a great fan of Japanese animation or anime. But like a number of other close observers of the animation industry, I could not but help admire and envy the diversity and breadth of product turned out in Japan. Like a number of my colleagues, I would use the Japanese example to berate American (and other) producers for not being able to see animation as other than as something for kids. (This has not always been the case, but this fact has seemingly vanished from Hollywood's collective memory.)

In recent years, I also could not help but notice that growing influence of anime in Hollywood and in Europe. As Jerry Beck notes in his article, "Anime: Hollywood's Invisible Animation Genre," major filmmakers, such as Bill Kroyer and Peter Chung, have increasingly expressed their admiration for the work of their Japanese colleagues and pay homage to it in such shows as *Aeon Flux*. Thus, despite the outward signs of resistance on the part of American producers, it has become increasingly clear that Japanese animation is on the verge of breaking into the mainstream in both the United States and Europe.

Thus, it seemed appropriate that in this issue we explore the impact anime has had outside of Japan, as well as touch on some of its history. In this, Jerry Beck's piece is an excellent polemic, as well as providing some of the background on



the current renaissance of anime in the US. Fred Patten, in his "Capsule History of Anime" provides a quick tour of the anime history, detailing the major trends both in terms of genre and in terms of how different segments of the Japanese animation industry have developed.

In "Fred Ladd: An Interview," I talk with the producer who was responsible for preparing a number of early anime classics for the American market, which helped boost the Japanese animation industry and provided the basis for its widespread appeal in the United States.

The increasing success of anime in recent years has not gone entirely unnoticed by mainstream companies. Thus, Mark Segall, in his "Manga Entertainment: Taking Anime To The Next Stage," explores how the first major distributor of Japanese animation with relatively "deep pockets" is changing things on an international scale.

John Gosling, in his "Anime In Europe," explores the ways anime has been fighting its way through

much of Europe, battling censors and accusations of too much sex and violence along the way. At the same time, Gosling, in "The Hidden World Of Anime," explores the various cultural influences upon Japanese animation, ranging from classic forms like kabuki to contemporary attitudes towards women.

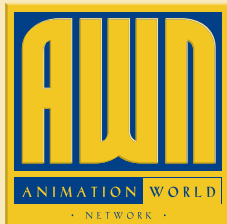
Raoul Servais, the famed Belgium filmmaker who will be honored at this month's Hiroshima Animation Festival, is interviewed herein by Philippe Moins. In it, Servais talks about his philosophy of filmmaking, his friends in animation and his experiences in making his first feature, *Taxandria*.

Speaking of festivals, Mark Langer reports on the first edition of the Singapore Animation Fiesta, a vest pocket event that seems destined to be a regular biannual event.

Finally, Frankie Kowalski's Desert Island Series relates the top 10 choices of a number of anime-related personages, while John Dilworth introduces us to his "Dirty Birdy" comic strip, which will be a regular feature.

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# Letters to the Editor

## The Kitsch-Meister of Burbank

Embedded within R.O. Blechman's spirited, high culture philippic against Disney ["Transfixed and Goggle-Eyed," June 1996] is a revealing slip. He describes how UPAs graphic invention took the wind out of Disney's sails in the 50s, causing the Kitsch-Meister of Burbank to overcome his own vulgar literalism and turn out a modernistic cartoon of suitable stylization and reduction (*Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Boom*). He then adds "If animation is the sincerest form of flattery, it is also the surest sign of artistic bankruptcy." Of course Blechman means "imitation," not "animation," and yet there may be a more sinister truth unconsciously buried within this grammatical archeology.

Lets assume that Disney *is* animation. Forget about Lotte Reiniger, Bill Plympton, Brothers Quay, and the other subjects of the "Independent Spirit" issue. He (not any one person, but the media Golem that Walt built and Eisner continues to aggrandize) has colonized our imagination and embodies all that is pernicious in our art. Not just because he has no taste. Not just because he is a monopolistic capitalist who will use every scheme to maintain market share. Not just because he is socially conservative. I think his biggest crime *is* flattery, the sincerest form of pandering. The

Disney product is designed to reassure its audience that everything is OK: sit back, relax, and have a good time. Yes, we are goggle-eyed at marvelous visions of virtuoso animation and, having checked our brains at the door, we truly believe that someday our prince will come, and in the meantime we can congratulate ourselves for empathizing with a lovable little hunchback.

While I concur with Blechman's esthetic critique, Disney's chief offense is his non-controversial, vanilla disposition, which can be summed up in one word: "nice." If independent animators are to reclaim any measure of respect in this eternal, Oedipal conflict, we can certainly do worse than follow the recipe offered by Tina Turner in "Proud Mary" when she sneered, "We never do anything nice 'n easy; we do it nice 'n rough."

George Griffin,

New York City

*The author is an independent filmmaker.*

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# Anime:

## Hollywood's Invisible Animation Genre

by Jerry Beck

**J**uly, 1996: The animated feature films of Hayao Miyazaki are to be distributed by the Walt Disney Company; Blockbuster Video devotes an average of two video cases per store to renting and selling Japanese animation; a store called "Anime Crash," totally devoted to selling Japanese animation and related paraphernalia, opens in New York City. These three random observations are clearly part of a new American awareness and recognition of Japanese animation.

Japanese animation (or anime) is a commercial and artistic reality that can no longer be denied by American business, particularly the Hollywood majors. And while those studios have long ignored the qualities of Japanese animation, American artists and animators have been borrowing their tricks for years—and such stylish productions as MTV's *Aeon Flux*, Warner's *Batman: The Animated Series* and Disney features such as *Hunchback* and *Lion King* have been significantly influenced by Japanese animators.



**Akira**

Courtesy of Jerry Beck. © Akira Committee

American creators have long cornered the market for family films and funny animals in cartoons, but during the last 30 years the Japanese have been perfecting the art of action/adventure storytelling

in animation; creating sophisticated science fiction stories and graphics to match. These films have won international acclaim and popularity, with only American audiences unable to accept that animation can go in these directions.

### Hungering For More

**B**ut that perception is changing. As late as 1988, the only way you could see state-of-the-art Japanese animation in the US was through bootleg video dealers, usually found at comic book conventions. A few fan clubs sprung up, mainly on college campuses, screening TV episodes and feature films. Fans of anime, weaned on US. dubbed imports such as *Astro Boy*, *Gigantor*, *Speed Racer*, *Robotech*, *Star Blazers* and *Battle Of The Planets*, had hungered for more.

*Akira* was released in Japan in 1988 and Marvel Comics began a serialized translation of the original *manga*. (comics). As a follower of world animation, I'd often wondered why someone hadn't brought over one of these high-tech features for commercial purposes. They certainly were well made and had many exploitable elements—particularly





**Wicked City**  
Courtesy of Jerry Beck.

violence and sexual situations unseen in any American cartoon since *Fritz The Cat*. My own involvement with this genre began as a child, when I noticed the unique style of shows like *Astro Boy* and *Eighth Man*—the shows with the characters with “big eyes.”

I remember, as a little boy, seeing a Japanese kid I went to summer day camp with reading a Japanese comic book with *Astro Boy* on the cover—and from that moment on I realized that those “big eyed” characters were Japanese. Later, when I was able to read the credits to *Speed Racer*, I confirmed that fact. Flash forward about 10 years: Circumstances led me to a meeting with Osamu Tezuka in 1979 at the New York premiere of *Space Firebird 2772*. I was working for United Artists Classics, a distributor of niche foreign films. I obtained a 3/4” video cassette of the Tezuka film and had the company take a look. While I thought it was both an artistic success and had commercial possibilities, my bosses returned the tape to me with

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**Only American audiences were unable to accept that animation can go in these directions.**

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a terse statement about how, “We don’t release Saturday Morning cartoons.”

I still remember being shocked by that statement. Hadn’t they seen the same film I did? That was the

day I learned a hard truth about Hollywood (if not the whole general public)—to them, a cartoon is a cartoon. Today, I can look back at *Space Firebird* and see the “Saturday morning” cartoon they turned down, but only in light of the sophistication of current Japanese output.

### **An Idea Was Born**

In 1986 and 1988, I had the privilege to work on two editions of the Los Angeles International Animation Celebration. I noted that the screenings of Japanese films sold out well in advance; interest in them was second only to the computer animation programs. The American producer of one of the Japanese features, Carl Macek of *Robotech: The Movie*, was a friend of a few years and while we stood in the back of the packed 2,000 seat auditorium, an idea was born.

I had learned the business of theatrical film distribution during the previous 10 years as a booker and salesman for UA Classics, Orion Classics and Expanded Entertainment. Why not get the rights to one of these films and prove my previ-



**Lensman**  
Courtesy of Jerry Beck



**Dirty Pair**  
Courtesy of Jerry Beck.

ous bosses wrong? Carl and I knew there was an audience hungry for Japanese animation and plenty of great product sitting on shelves in Japan. All that was needed were the middlemen, the distributors.

Thus, later that year, Streamline Pictures was born. We were able to get the theatrical rights to a few films (*Laputa*, *Twilight Of The Cockroaches* and *Lensman*) with little trouble and began booking them into specialized theaters across the US. We were doing modestly well, when we had a very lucky break: *Akira*.

### **"We Can't Release This to Kids!"**

**A**kira is an adult animated film and superior in every way. I had never seen anything like it, and in a theater, on the big screen with Dolby stereo, it was spectacular! Its producers wanted it released in the US and quickly had the film dubbed (poorly), but were turned down by every studio in Hollywood. One studio executive, forewarned in advance of the R-rated violence and attempted rape

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**One studio, forewarned in advance of the R-rated violence and attempted rape sequence, had the film turned off at the first sight of blood.**

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sequence, had the film turned off at the first sight of blood. "We can't release this to kids!" the producers were told. "Kids" were not its intended audience, but it didn't matter: A cartoon is a cartoon to Hollywood.

In desperation, perhaps, they turned to Streamline Pictures. We wanted the film badly and knew exactly what to do with it. We got plugs for local theaters in the Marvel comic book. We aligned promotions with local comic book stores. We booked it in limited play dates to boost attendance. By the time we opened in New York, we were a hit. Japanese animation had been dis-

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**That was the day I learned a hard truth about Hollywood — to them, a cartoon is a cartoon.**

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covered and legitimized. Art theaters had discovered the audience, movie critics sat up and took notice, and magazines began to promote these as alternative animated features.

With the rights to *Akira*, Streamline began its road into video sell through market. Competition from Central Park Media, US. Renditions and others began to spring up. A flood of direct-to-video titles from Japan now invade your local video store's shelves. Hollywood has ignored these films as insignificant. They don't understand that the fan base who were teenagers in the 1970s and 1980s are now adults with purchasing power. They still crave the action and excitement the best anime can provide. Some of those kids are now running their own animation studios (such as Kevin Alteri of Wildstorm Productions [*Gen 13*] and Joe Pearson of Epoch, Ink [*Captain Simian*]), some are now the best animators in Hollywood (Peter Chung at Colossal), and some are the best independent filmmakers of our generation (Bill Plympton). These invisible animated films and their filmmakers are at last coming into focus.

*Jerry Beck was co-founder of Streamline Pictures, which he left in 1993. He is also an animation historian, who recently produced Betty Boop: The Definitive Collection, an eight-volume home video set that will be released this fall by Republic Pictures.*



# A Capsule History of Anime

(Note: for convenience, where English-language titles have been established for Japanese films, they are used in this article even when they are not accurate translations. For example, the 1958 theatrical feature *Hakuja Den*, or *The White Snake Enchantress*, is referred to by its 1961 American title, *Panda and the Magic Serpent*.)



***Crying Freedom*, 1988. An example of adult-themed, violent and sexually explicit anime for the home video market.**

Courtesy of Fred Patten. © 1988, 1993 Toei Video Co., Ltd.

The earliest Japanese animation was by individual film hobbyists inspired by American and European pioneer animators. The first three Japanese cartoons were one-reelers of one to five minutes each, in 1917. Animation of the 1920s ran from one-to-three reels. A few were imitations of foreign cartoons, such as the *Felix the Cat* series, but most were dramatizations of Oriental folk tales

**It was a juvenile adventure showing the Imperial Navy resolutely liberating Indonesia and Malaysia from the buffoonish foreign-devil (with horns) Allied occupiers.**

in traditional Japanese art styles.

Notable silent-era animators include Oten Shimokawa, Junichi Kouchi, Seitaro Kitayama, Sanae Yamamoto (whose 1924 *The Mountain Where Old Women Are Abandoned* seems to be the earliest anime title still extant), Yasuji Murata, and the master of paper silhouette animation, Noboru Ofuji. Most of them worked in small home studios, though they came to be financed by Japanese theatrical companies which provided production money in exchange for distribution rights.

During the 1930s, folk tales began to give way to Western-style fast-paced humor. These

gradually reflected the growing influence of Japanese militarism, such as Mituyo Seo's 1934 11-minute cartoon *Private 2nd-Class Norakuro*, an adaptation of Suihou Tagawa's popular newspaper comic strip about an unlucky dog soldier in a funny-animal army. After Japan went to war in China in 1937, the need to get productions approved by government censors resulted in a steady stream of militaristic propaganda cartoons. In 1943, the Imperial military government decided Japan needed its first animated feature. Mituyo Seo was authorized to assemble a team of animators for the task. Their 74-minute *Momotarō's Gods-Blessed Sea Warriors* was a juvenile adventure showing the Imperial Navy as brave, cute anthropomorphic animal sailors resolutely liberating Indonesia and Malaysia from the buffoonish foreign-devil (with horns) Allied occu-



***Akira*, 1988. A theatrical sensation in Japan and the first major release of the new American anime market in 1990.**

Courtesy of Fred Patten. © Akira Committee



piers—too late for even wishful dreaming, as it was barely released (in April 1945) before the war's end.

Animation returned to the individual filmmakers right after World War II. However, they were hampered for the next decade by the slow recovery of the Japanese economy. They also found their amateur films competing with the polished cartoons from American studios, which poured into Japan with the Occupation forces. The first Japanese full-color animation did not appear until 1955. It soon became clear that the future of Japanese animation lay in adopting the Western studio system. (However, independent anime artists have never disappeared. Thus, the first Japanese animator to achieve international name recognition was Yoji Kuri, whose art films of usually less than a minute each appeared in international film festivals during the 1960s and 70s.)

### American-Style Studios

Attempts to create American-style studios began right after the war, but the first real success did not come until Toei Animation Co. was organized in 1956. Its earliest leading animator, Yasuji Mori, directed Toei's first notable short cartoon, *Doodling Kitty*, in May 1957. But to the general public, Japan's entry into professional animation came with the company's first theatrical feature, *Panda and the Magic Serpent*, released in October 1958.

Toei's first few features followed the Disney formula very closely.



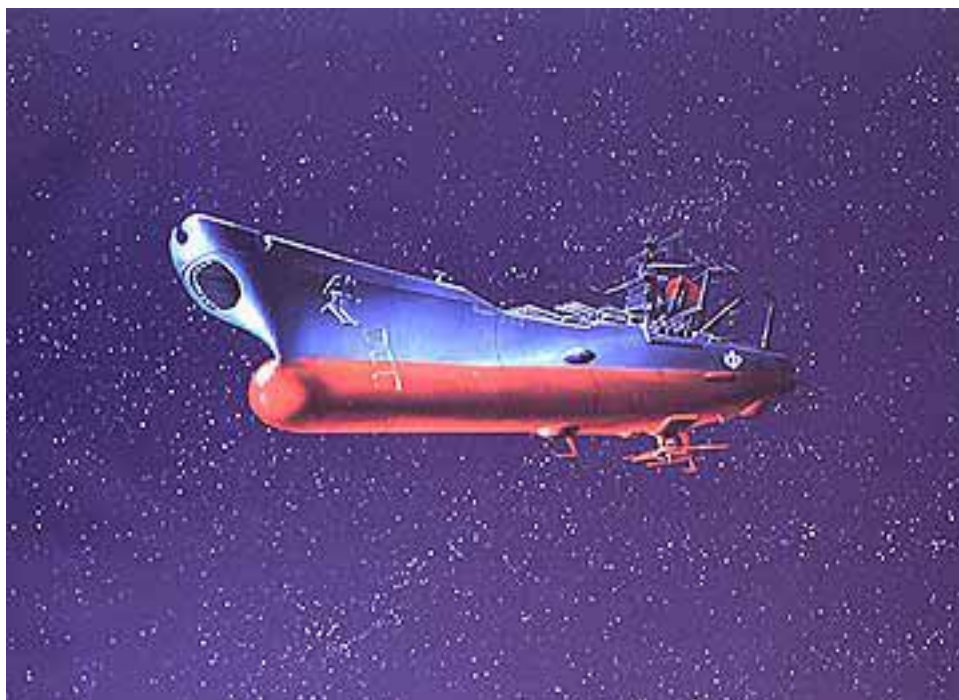
**Barefoot Gen, 1983.** Cartoonist Keiji Nakazawa's semi-autobiographical account of surviving the 1945 Hiroshima atomic bombing as a six-year-old boy.  
Courtesy of Fred Patten. © Keiji Nakazawa

### Television animation became much more popular in Japan than it ever was in America.

They were produced a year apart; they were based upon popular folk tales—Oriental rather than Euro-

pean—and the heroes had many cute, funny-animal companions. The first six were distributed in America, usually a couple of years after they were first shown in Japan. The second through sixth (with their American titles but Japanese release years) were *Magic Boy* (1959), *Alakazam the Great* (1960), *The Littlest Warrior* (1961), *The Adventures of Sinbad* (1962, all five directed by Taiji Yabushita), and *The Little Prince and the Eight-Headed Dragon* (1963, directed by Yugo Serikawa with an avant-garde stylized design by

Yasuji Mori). Unfortunately, these were not successful in the United States and Japanese theatrical animation disappeared from America for the next two decades—unless it could be sold to TV as an afternoon children's movie.



Japan's World War II battleship was restored and sent into space to defend Earth in *Space Battleship Yamato* (US title: *Star Blazers*).  
Courtesy of Fred Patten. © 1974, 1980, Yoshinobu Nishizaki

## Something Unexpected

But *Alakazam the Great* led to something unexpected. Although directed by Yabushita, it was based upon a popular 1950s comic-book adaptation by Osamu Tezuka of the ancient Chinese *Monkey King* legend. The young Tezuka was Japan's most popular comic-strip and comic-book artist during the 1950s, who virtually invented Japan's modern manga industry. Since the movie used his plot and visual style, he was consulted on its adaptation and became involved with its promotion.

This caused him to switch his attention from comic books to animation.

Tezuka was also impressed by the appearance in Japan of the first Hanna-Barbera television cartoons of the late 1950s, which led him to conclude that he could produce limited animation for the new TV market. More importantly, he realized from the popularity of his comic books—especially such futuristic titles as *Astro Boy*—that there was a strong demand for modern, fast-paced fantasy which the animation establishment, with its narrow focus on fairy tales in antique storybook settings, was completely ignoring.

As a result, Tezuka organized Japan's first TV animation studio, Mushi Productions. Not counting an experimental art film, *Stories on a Street Corner* (1962), its first release was a weekly series based upon *Astro Boy*, which debuted on New Year's Day 1963. It was such an instant success that, by the end of 1963, there were three more television animation studios in production and Toei Animation had opened a TV division. By the end of the 1960s, the popularity of TV



One of those "magical little girls":  
Toei Animation's Lun-Lun, *The Flower Child* (1979-80).  
Courtesy of Fred Patten. ©1979, Toei Animation Co., Ltd.

science-fiction action-adventure anime was so overwhelming that Toei began to alternate it with fairy-tale fare for its theatrical features.

Television animation became much more popular in Japan than

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**Many of these have become  
Japan's top-grossing  
theatrical films, live-action  
or animated.**

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One of the earliest anime remakes:  
*Astro Boy's Adventures* were retold in a  
new, higher-quality, more melodramatic  
52-episode serial in 1980-81.  
Courtesy of Fred Patten.  
© 1980, Tezuka Productions Co.

it ever was in America. This was largely due to Tezuka's influence. He had drawn in just about every medium available, including childrens' picture books, romantic comic-book soap operas for women's magazines, risqué humor for men's magazines, and political cartoons for newspapers. He established the attitude that cartooning was an acceptable form of storytelling for any age group; this is in sharp contrast to the United States, where

the attitude became, "Cartoons and comic books are only for children." Tezuka himself brought sophisticated adult animation to movie theaters with his 1969 art feature *A Thousand and One Nights* (which left in the eroticism of the original *Arabian Nights*) and the 1970 *Cleopatra* (a time-travel farce with anachronisms such as Julius Caesar as a cigar-chomping, American-style politician). By the 1970s, TV studios such as TCJ (Television Corporation of Japan), Tatsunoko Production Co., Tokyo Movie Shinsha (TMS), and Nippon Animation, to name just the major ones, were churning out animated mystery dramas, older-teen sports-team soap operas and Western literary classics such as *Heidi*, *Girl of the Alps* (directed by Isao Takahata) and *The Diary of Anne Frank*, along with traditional juvenile fantasy adventures.

## Giant Robot & Outer Space Adventures

There was a flood of toy-promotional fantasies, featuring action-heroes for boys and "magical little girls" who could trans-



form into older-teen heartthrobs for girls. Among the most influential was Toei's adaptation of comic-book artist Go Nagai's *Mazinger Z*, the first of the sagas about a gigantic flying mechanical warrior controlled by an (invariably teen) human pilot to defend Earth against invading space monsters. This combined the dramatic aspects of knights in armor battling dragons, with fighter pilots in aerial combat against enemy armies. *Mazinger Z* and Nagai's direct sequels *Great Mazinger* and *UFO Robot Grandizer* ran for 222 weekly episodes from 1972 through 1977. By the mid-1980s there had been over 40 different giant-robot anime series, covering virtually every channel and every animation studio in Japan. It was these shows, subtitled on Japanese-community TV channels in America, which started the anime cult among American fans in the late 1970s.

Closely related were the futuristic outer-space adventures which began in 1974 with *Space Battleship Yamato*; basically a wish-fulfillment replay of World War II, with the united Earth armies (Japan) fighting from planet to planet across the galaxy (Pacific) against the conquering Gamilon invaders. *Yamato* was fortunately timed for the explosive popularity of space operas following the importation of *Star Wars* from the US; a series of *Yamato* TV-series and theatrical-feature sequels followed. During the late 1970s and early 80s, the hottest cartoonist in anime was *Yamato*'s creator Leiji Matsumoto, with TV cartoon series and theatrical features based upon his other space-adventure manga, such as *Space Pirate Captain Harlock*, *Galaxy Express 999* and *The Queen of 1,000 Years*.



1970s TV anime was dominated by dozens of giant-robot adventure series. This example is of Leiji Matsumoto's *Planetary Robot Danguard Ace*. Courtesy of Fred Patten. © 1977, Toei Animation Co., Ltd.

### Miyazaki and Takahata

By the mid-1980s, anime had been dominated by TV production for two decades. Two developments changed this. One was the return to prominence of theatrical feature animation, through the films of Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata. The two were friends who had worked both together and separately at various anime studios in Tokyo since the 1960s.

In the early 1980s, Miyazaki began a science-fiction comic-book adventure, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, for *Animage*, an animation-fan magazine from one of Japan's largest publishers, Tokuma. This led to a Tokuma-financed feature which Miyazaki also directed. The 1984 *Nausicaä* was a smash success, resulting in Tokuma subsidizing a new animation studio, Studio Ghibli, for the personal theatrical features of Miyazaki and his friend Takahata. Studio Ghibli has

released an average of a feature a year since then, alternating between the productions of Miyazaki and Takahata: Miyazaki's *Laputa: the Castle in the Sky* (1986), *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988), *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989) and *The Crimson Pig* (1992); and Takahata's *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988), *Only Yesterday* (1991) and *Pom Poko* (1994). Many of these have become Japan's top-grossing theatrical films, live-action or animated. Takahata's *Pom Poko* was also submitted as Japan's candidate for being an Academy Awards nominee for the Best Foreign Film Oscar. Some other notable theatrical features during the past decade include writer-director Katsuhiro Otomo's cyberpunk thriller *Akira* (1988) and director Mamoru Oshii's adaptation of Masamune Shirow's sci-fi manga novel *Ghost in the Shell* (1995).

### Original Anime Video

The second development was the emergence of the home-video market. Beginning in 1984, animation began to be produced especially for this market (resulting in a Japanese-created English term, OVA or OAV—for Original Anime Video—which has been adopted by American anime fandom as well). OAV animation is usually higher in quality than TV animation, but not as rich as theatrical animation. As with most aspects of popular culture, 90% of it is little better than trash, while 10% may be brilliantly imaginative and innovative. Video productions can run from a half-hour to 2 hours, and from independent titles to serials of from 2 to 10 videos. OAVs are often better than either movies or television for stories which are too long



*Grave of the Fireflies (Tombstone For Fireflies )* by Isao Takahata  
Courtesy of the Singapore Animation Fiesta

for a standard theatrical release, but not long enough for a TV series. The OAV market is not subject to the public standards for television, so it often becomes notorious for its most lurid examples of violence and pornography. At the other extreme, some of its better examples (such as the *Patlabor* near-future police-procedural dramas or the *No Time for Tenchi* teen sci-fi comedies) have become so popular and acclaimed that they have led to their own anime TV series and theatrical films. There are anime-fan magazines devoted to just the anime video market, which list an average of 40 to 45 new releases per month, one-third of which are brand-new OAVs, with the rest being reissues and video releases of theatrical, TV and foreign titles. These OAV titles are the main source for the anime being released in America today, since their licenses are more affordable than those of expensive theatrical features or of multi-episode TV series.

Today, animation in Japan is considered to be in a creative doldrums. Due to the sheer volume of the output over the past three decades, the good ideas have "all been used up." The current trend

is for OAV remakes of anime favorites of 20 or 30 years ago, featuring a flashy 90s art slant and a more "sophisticated" (cynical) story line—very similar to the American trend for turning classic live-action TV series into big-budget theatrical films. But many of the titles and concepts that are stale in Japan are still fresh to American audiences, so anime still has an encouraging growth period ahead of it in the US.

*Fred Patten has written on anime for fan and professional magazines since the late 1970s. He currently writes a regular anime column for Animation Magazine.*

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# Fred Ladd: An Interview

by Harvey Deneroff

With anime's new found popularity, it is perhaps easy to forget that Japanese animation had gained a measure of success in the United States some 30 years ago. Central to this success was producer Fred Ladd, who helped pioneer the American distribution of anime, a field in which he continues to be involved.

Ladd, a native of Toledo, Ohio, who studied Radio & TV at Ohio State University, was based in New York for the first 30 years of his career, which did not initially start out in animation. His involvement and career in this arena was, in fact, somewhat serendipitous.

"I had gone to work at an advertising agency," he recalls, "where I wound up doing a lot of nature documentaries. The very first one, *Jungle*, was about animals and their natural habitats. It was sold to some countries which could not export dollars to pay for the shows, but they could send us films in exchange.

"So, the question became, 'What kind of film are we going to take?' We didn't want to have foreign art films—we weren't in that business—but there were a lot of cartoons that we could take," which they did. These films, many in what seemed to be in "bastard lengths of 30 to 50 minutes, which are standard programming lengths in Europe, for which there was no market for on American TV, espe-



Fred Ladd

Photo by Harvey Deneroff

cially as single films." Ladd thus took on the task to adapt these films for the American market.

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**NBC picked it up very cheap, not even knowing what they were buying.**

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His solution was to dub them into English and package them into 5 to 5-1/2 minute episodes, which were released under the name of *Cartoon Classics*. His success with this and two other programs, *The Space Explorers* and *The New Adventurers of the Space Explorer*, led to his involvement in the production of the animated feature, *Pinocchio in Outer Space*, which was released theatrically by Universal Pictures. (He would later help produce a second feature, *Journey Back to Oz*, which involved the artistic collaboration of Preston Blair.)

Astro Boy

Sometime in 1963," Ladd recalls, "NBC's representative in Tokyo saw a very, very limited action, adventure show on television about a little boy called *Tetsuan Atom*, which means Iron Fisted Atom Boy. NBC Enterprises, a division of the broadcast network, picked it up very cheap, not even knowing what they were buying. No one spoke Japanese. No one really understood it.

"They then tracked me down, knowing I had done a lot of cartoon dubbing as well as

*Pinocchio in Outer Space*, and showed me a couple of episodes and asked me what I thought. As a result, I made a pilot, NBC saw it and said, 'Alright, do another one. We think we can sell this. I did and it became *Astro Boy*.'

Over the next two years, Ladd prepared 104 episodes of the show for the American market (out of an original 193). The show was not shown on network television, but was rather marketed via syndication and sold to some 50 stations around the country, where it proved to be very successful.

"*Astro Boy*," Ladd points out, "was created by Osamu Tezuka, who was known as the Walt Disney of Japan—a revered artist, a national treasure. *Tetsuan Atom* had appeared first as a comic strip and the Fuji Television Network, which had just started up, only transmit-

ted in black and white, which is why the show was done in black and white. No one knew how to work in color in those days, mainly because you didn't have any studios before then.

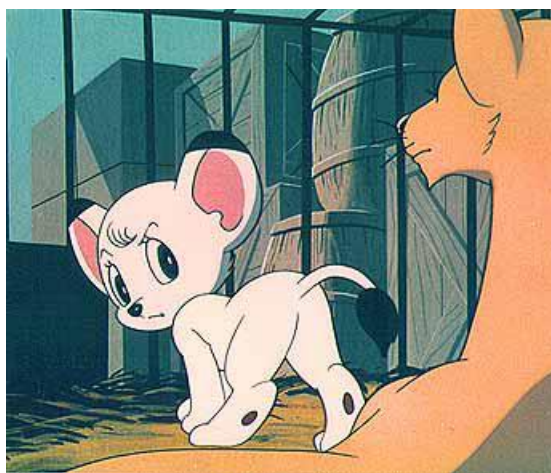
"The show," he feels, "put Japan on the map as an animation production country. And as soon as that hit, all of sudden, all over Tokyo, a hundred studios sprang up overnight." Though the success of *Tetsuan Atom* in the US was not a major factor in this flowering, it certainly had an effect on Tezuka and his company, Mushi Productions.

### Gigantor & Kimba

In 1964, an agent came to NBC Enterprises "with another Japanese show, *Tetsujin 28* (Iron Man 28), about a giant robot in the year 2000 and beyond. But NBC passed on it, as they did not want to compete with themselves." However, they referred him to Ladd, who bought the show, which became *Gigantor*, which he had distributed by Trans-Lux and it "became a substantial hit."

"In 1965," Ladd recalls, "Tezuka's company came out with its first color production, *Jungle Taitei* (Jungle Emperor), which became *Kimba, the White Lion* and was again handled by NBC. (In the original show, the lion was called Leo; we almost called him Simba, but *Kimba* was a unique word, Simba was not.)

"*Kimba* went to 52 episodes. More were made in Japan, but NBC didn't commit to them. They just took the shows where



Scene from the pilot episode of *Kimba, The White Lion*  
Courtesy of Fred Patten.

*Kimba* was a cuddly white lion, not the ones where he becomes an adult. They wanted him to stay a little lion, as *Bambi* was a cute little deer."

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**They just took the shows where *Kimba* was a cuddly little white lion, not the ones where he becomes an adult.**

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Like the previous Japanese shows he worked on, *Kimba* proved to be a "big money maker" in the US. Years later, it gained a bit of unintended fame when Disney was accused by anime fans of basing much of *The Lion King* on the show. Ladd recalls noting the many

"coincidences" between the two when he first saw the Disney film. "Finally, after five or six striking similarities, there was a pan up to the sky. I said to my wife, 'Don't tell me that the father lion is going to appear in the clouds. *And he did!* I couldn't believe it!"

He feels that Disney's assertion at the time that no one on *The Lion King* had been influenced by *Kimba* was ludicrous. However, he notes that, "Tezuka was a big fan of Disney.

In fact, Tezuka did a 45 minute featurette in which he used characters that looked like the seven dwarfs. So, when Disney proved to be an admirer of *Kimba*, the studio did not retaliate. When they were called about this, they said that they were sure that Mr. [Don] Hahn [*The Lion King's* producer] did not deliberately do this, and that, 'We are sure that Disney would not deliberately do this and it's all purely coincidental. Our leader [Tezuka died in 1989] would have been very flattered."

Ladd continued working on various Japanese series, including doing the "early work," for the English-language versions of *Ace Man* and the legendary *Speed Racer*. His involvement in this area continues even to this day, having recently completed a stint putting together the American version of *Sailor Moon* for DIC.

### American Personae

Ladd speaks fondly of his involvement in the early days of anime and of his friendship with Tezuka. Although he played a crucial role in bringing Japanese



*Speed Racer*  
Courtesy of Fred Patten. © Tatsunoko Production Co.





The five "Sailor Scouts": (left to right) Sailor Mercury, Sailor Venus, Sailor Moon, Sailor Mars, Sailor Jupiter in Sailor Moon  
© DIC Entertainment

animation to the United States, he is quick to point out that he "had nothing to do with their creation. But the creation of the American personae [of these shows] came out of my shop," and it is something that he is very proud of.

For one, Ladd says that Tezuka was very pleased with what he did with *Kimba*. "He liked the English version very much," he says. "We

injected humor where he hadn't envisioned any, and it just delighted him. We saw facets of the show that just didn't play in Japanese culture, but worked well in English. (His English was sufficient that he understood it.) For instance, we gave all the characters comic names, such as Mr. Pompous—for some reason that name really delighted Tezuka."

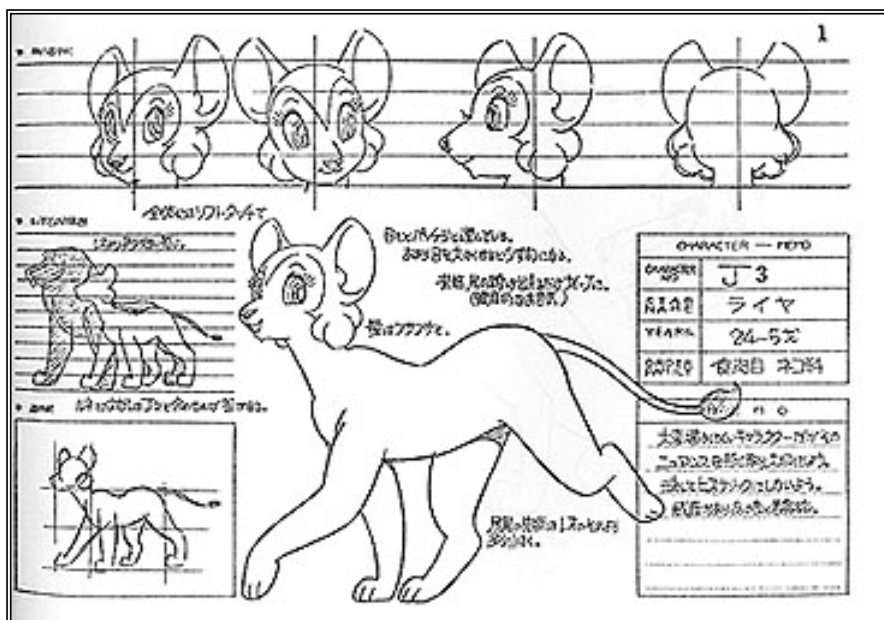
**By the 1970s, you couldn't give away a Japanese-made series here.**

The early success of Japanese animated TV shows in the United States proved to be short-lived. "By the 1970s," Ladd points out, "you couldn't give away a Japanese-made series here, because of the pressure to reduce the amount of violence on TV." Thus, shows like *Gatchaman*, when they were released in the US were initially shown in highly sanitized versions, without much success. (Ladd did not work on the initial American release of the show, but was later called in by Turner to prepare a more integral version under the title of *G Force*, which is now being shown on the Cartoon Network.)

Now based out of Los Angeles, Ladd is very excited about the newfound popularity of Japanese animation in the US, which he thinks is long overdue. It is a popularity he credits to young people who, referring to more limited animation often found in anime, "don't count cels," and for whom "the plays the thing."

*Harvey Deneroff, in addition to his duties as Editor of Animation World Magazine, edits and publishes The Animation Report, an industry newsletter, which can be reached at [deneroff@pacbell.net](mailto:deneroff@pacbell.net).*





Model sheet for Osamu Tezuka's *Kimba, The White Lion*.

Courtesy of Fred Patten.



One of the earliest anime remakes: *Astro Boy's Adventures* were retold in a new, higher-quality, more melodramatic 52-episode serial in 1980-81.

Courtesy of Fred Patten.

© 1980, Tezuka Productions Co.



The US *Kimba* crew in 1966 at a dinner during the middle of production. Standing, left to right: Fred Ladd, Cliff Owens, Hal Studer, Gilbert Mack. Seated, left to right: Eileen Ladd, Billie Lou Watt, Rose Mack, Francine Owens.

Photo by Gilbert Mack

Courtesy of Fred Patten.



Robin Leyden and Osamu Tezuka at Universal Studios in March 1978 with Leyden's statue of Astro Boy. (Leyden was an important figure in the history of anime fan clubs in the US.)

Courtesy of Robin Leyden and Fred Patten.

Publicity drawings for the title characters in Osamu Tezuka's *Kimba The White Lion* and *Astro Boy*.  
Courtesy of Fred Patten.



*Kimba, The White Lion*  
Courtesy of Fred Patten.



# Manga Entertainment: Taking Anime to the Next Stage

*Can Manga Entertainment translate anime from a domestic Japanese success story into a worldwide phenomenon?*

by Mark Segall

**M**anga Entertainment, now the largest distributor of anime in the world outside of Japan, started small. It grew out of the educational video department of Chris Blackwell's UK-based music company, Island Records. Mike Preece, now managing director of Manga, was first hired in the late 80s to launch Island Visual Arts. Typical releases: a life of Walt Whitman, animated tales from Shake-

**We found a whole underground of interested British kids, a cult thing that none of us really knew much about.**

London's prestigious Institute of Contemporary Arts. Katsuhiro Otomo's tale of street gangs, psychics, and sinister government projects was being billed as an art film, but Guinness immediately sensed a wider appeal. He exhorted his colleagues to buy the film for immediate video release, which they did. The cyberpunk epics runaway British success took Island by surprise and prompted them to look into the genre more carefully. "We found a whole underground of interested British kids, a cult thing that none of us really knew much about," says Preece.

## Out of the Kiddie Film Ghetto

**T**hanks to Guinness' proselytizing, a trip to Japan was organized for Island staffers. What they found amazed them: a country which produced 350 to 400 hours of animation a year, and where feature animation had long since broken out of the kiddie film ghetto. Anime dominated Japanese film and television; in popularity and range of subject matter, it was the Japanese equivalent of Hollywood.

Even more surprising, the stories came not from anonymous teams of screenwriters, but were

based on long-running stories by widely read comics (*manga*) artists revered as masters (*sensei*). The western cultural bias that comics are for children and those too stupid to read "real" books did not exist. On the contrary, manga occupied significant shelf space in every major bookstore and accounted for 27% of all books and magazines sold. One thing that appealed to Island Visual staffers was the auteur



Mike Preece, Managing Director,  
Manga Entertainment, Ltd. (UK)

speare, the Rabbit Ears stories for small children. How could he have guessed that less than 10 years later he'd be sending out press kits announcing "bizarre, violent, twisted and uniquely imaginative" offerings which "smash the boundaries of Western animation"? What twist of fate turned this mild-mannered purveyor of kidvid and classics into a specialist in cyborgs and samurai?

It all started in 1991 when Island Visual's Laurence Guinness caught the theatrical premiere of *Akira* at



Marvin Gleicher, CEO,  
Manga Entertainment, Inc. (Worldwide)

aspect of the enterprise. They were struck by the difference between these 600-page epics, usually created by one artist or small dedicated teams and the comic books they were used to—slender booklets on cheap paper produced by an army of hired hands. In Japan, being a comics artist wasn't an anonymous profession, but an avenue for rags to riches success like being a sports star or a rock singer.

While dazzled by these riches of the East, they were not entirely cer-

tain how to market them in the West. Serials and features ranged in subject matter from martial arts to mahjong. To break into the British market, sci-fi action adventure seemed like the category to concentrate on, so Island purchased a handful of epics they felt would appeal to the same audience as *Akira*. While limiting themselves genre-wise, they decided, whenever possible, to seek out the sen-

sei—to try to get distribution rights for the work of manga and anime stars—artists like Masamune Shirow and directors like Mamoru Oshii.

### A Music-Industry Strategy

**T**heir first innovation was to use music-industry strategy in the video market. In the past, Island Records had spun off separate labels for soul, blues and R&B. Island Visual decided to do the

same thing for Japanese animation. Once again, they were taken by surprise when the offshoot quickly outgrew the tree. In 1993, Manga Entertainment, a separate company devoted solely to anime, was formed, with Guinness as Director of Acquisition and Production.

To defray the massive costs of translation and dubbing, Manga went looking for an American partner, but none of the US companies had good distribution. They were essentially mail order businesses serving a small devoted group of dedicated fans. Manga then got the idea of making a distribution arrangement with a major record company. They approached Marvin Gleicher, head of Islands alternative rock subsidiary, Smash Records, in Chicago, and asked him to set up the deal. Would he leave behind 20 years in the music business to take the video plunge?

A year earlier, just by chance, Gleicher had caught Masamune Shirow's *Appleseed* on the Sci-Fi Channel. This feature about a cop and her cyborg partner in computer-controlled, inhumanly perfect post-World War III society inspired him to go looking for more Japanese animation. He brought home *Robotech* and the first *Giant Robo* and soon he was hooked. "My wife would hear these strange sounds emanating from the next room—the original Japanese dialogue—and ask, 'What are you listening to?'" It took less than a day for Gleicher to take up the offer and open Manga US. Does he miss the music business? Not for a minute. "I worked with good bands, but there were plenty of jerks. There are a lot of scumbags in film," he points out, "but at least they're better dressed."

Manga cut a distribution deal with Polygram. Their game plan: to run the campaign through a major



*Ninja Scroll*

© Manga Entertainment



distributor accustomed to selling big hits, yet employ the marketing style of an indie record label ... "We'd simply expose the public to the genre so they'd fall in love with it as we had," Gleicher explained. "We set up 150 university animation society screenings for free or for charity. We licensed stuff to MTV, and also promoted ourselves on the Sci-Fi Channel and [the video music channel] The Box."

## Marketing Muscle

**M**anga Entertainment had the marketing muscle to do things their smaller US predecessors could not—work directly with retailers like Tower Records on in-store promotions, create merchandise (caps, T-shirts, posters) and their own trademark character (Manga Man) to create brand name recognition, sponsor newsletters and fan clubs worldwide. They believe their efforts are expanding the market for everyone. "In keeping with Island International's 30 year tradition," proclaims their presskit, "our philosophy is not to overtly compete but rather to innovate and create new trends which others may imitate." With the UK market nearly saturated, and the US market just starting to grow, Gleicher was promoted to CEO and Manga headquarters shifted to the US.

"What we've done," Gleicher explains, "rather than going into mass market magazines, or to mass market broadcasters, is to broaden our marketing niche by niche. The first niche—the one we always keep in mind—is our core audience, the original anime fans. We always

**They were taken by surprise when the offshoot quickly outgrew the tree.**

make sure to release the original, untouched Japanese version for them. Next come the sectors of the community into comics, not necessarily Japanese comics—skateboarders, Internet-surfers, science fiction fans." In the future, he aims to market to the hip-hop and street community.

UK releases since 1991 now number over 200. Manga US re-



**Angel Cop**  
© Manga Entertainment

leased 37 titles in 1995 and has 40 more scheduled by the end of 1996. The company has captured 3% of UK's \$750 million video market, and is shooting for similar success in the US. When it comes to what kind of titles they look to acquire, Gleicher and Preece are of one mind. The releases have to be action-packed. Good story, and good animation are key. Something that expands the genre, using a style or technique not seen before

is preferred. The target audience is male, 12-15 years old, though occasionally Manga "goes older," aiming at 18-30 year olds. R-rated titles have appeal, but bizarre, X-rated titles like *Revenge Of The Overfiend* are out.

## US Slate

**M**anga's slate of US releases so far includes a handful of features and a number of the long-running serials unique to Japan. *Giant Robo*, based on the original manga by *Gigantor* creator Mitsuteru Yokoyama is a drama/suspense yarn with lots of comic touches. (The director claims to have gotten much of his inspiration from the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*!) It features a boy, his giant robot and a crime-fighting organization known as the Agents of Justice. *Dominion Tank Police*, Shirow's "heavily armored black comedy" is set in a futuristic city where a crime is committed every 36 seconds. Cops with tanks battle heavily armed criminals, including the scantily clad Puma Sisters, twins who like to strip before they kill. *Black Magic M66*, with story screenplay and direction by Shirow, tells the story of a female journalist protecting

a young girl from two android assassins, part of a top secret military operation gone wrong. There are more robots gone bad in Mamoru Oshii's *Patlabor* series. Future crimes committed with giant robots called "Labors" and must be policed by Labor-equipped cops.

For those who can figure out its tangled lineage, *Macross Plus* is a descendant of two earlier *Macross* series and a cousin of the *Robotech* series Carl Macek adapted for US

consumption. Pilots "Isamu and Guld push their transforming aircraft to the limit in an all-out test of wills" and also compete for Myung, manager of computer-generated pop star Sharon Apple.

More squarely in the *mecha* category of stories centered around complex, multifarious machines is *Orguss-02*, in which opposing armies race to unearth massive, long-buried war-engines known as *Decimators*. Manga Video has replaced the original soundtrack with an eclectic new score. "We're trying to integrate a lot of cool music into these films," Gleicher notes, "to combine edge music with really well-done edge animation." In another mecha series, *The Guyver*, a high school kid is taken over by a suit of organic armor. Once encased, he is forced to fight the monstrous Zoanoids.

Manga also has two police series: hyperviolent cop *Mad Bull* fights crime in New York, while Tokyo's *Angel Cop* battles terrorists, government conspiracies and cyborgs, while being stalked by "psychic hunters." In the supernatural series *Devilman*, only Akira, a purehearted teenager who has acquired a demon body, can defend humanity against a race of demons.

Rounding out the current collection is Manga's latest feature-length release, *Ghost In The Shell*, a co-production with Shodansha, the giant publisher, who first serialized Shirow's story in one of their mangas. The Oshii-directed feature is both a high-tech suspense thriller and a contemplation on what it means to be human. Cybernetically augmented agent Motoko Kusanagi is on the trail of the Puppet Master, an artificial



*Patlabor II*  
© Manga Entertainment

intelligence created for government use which has escaped into the Net, having developed a mind—and an agenda—of its own. *Terminator*

**Our philosophy is not to overtly compete, but rather to innovate and create new trends which others may imitate.**

director James Cameron called the film, "a stunning work of speculative fiction, the first truly adult animation film to reach a level of liter-



*Black Majo M66*  
© Manga Entertainment

ary and visual excellence." After playing theatrically in over 30 US markets, it was released on video in mid June.

### A Breakthrough Film?

Manga hopes *Ghost* will be a breakthrough film, the one that inspires the uninitiated to take the anime plunge. They're marketing it heavily at combo retailers—those big outlets like Suncoast and Warehouse which were once known as record stores. "As mass as we get," Gleicher explained, "is Musicland and Best Buy. Music stores now get it—it's a no brainer to take a 12 pack of our best rather than pick through 40 or 50 titles puzzling over which to get. Tower has everything." The real stumbling block has been video rental chains like Blockbuster, which only take select titles in small quantities. "Rental stores tend to ignore anything that didn't take in \$100 million at the box office. Offer them a surefire Hollywood hit, each branch wants 20 copies. We can only persuade them to take one copy of *Ghost*. But that copy is always out! Eventually, we'll educate them.

"We have to look for things that will first of all do well in the US, then the UK, and after that continental Europe," says Preece. Spain is closing on the UK and France carries 30 hours a week of Japanese cartoons, making it an extremely promising market for Manga. "We're now looking at the emerging Eastern bloc, at Poland and Russia." Despite the large amount of bootlegging that goes on, Preece still thinks the films will do well.

Manga has the rights for the South American territories, potentially a bigger market



than Europe. So far, only two titles have been dubbed into Spanish, but there will be more. "Brazil with the largest Japanese population outside Japan, is extremely promising. Australia and New Zealand have, of course, been Manga-branded for some years."

### Future Plans & Hopes

As to the future of anime, Gleicher says that, "for the past two years, the non-Japanese market has doubled annually, but I don't think that can continue. There aren't as many great titles. We'll still out-market and out-perform all the other distributors, but growth will probably slow down." Preece concurs. "We've bought virtually everything that moved, all the really good series and features." While there is still good stuff untapped, in terms of more episodes of the longest running series, he cannot see any US or UK company going back and translating 5 or 10 years worth of TV episodes; they would not be contemporary enough and it just would not be worth the cost. New production, they feel, is the way things are going.

The company is planning more theatrical co-productions like *Ghost*, including two or three features or an existing TV series. They may also produce CD-ROMs, though these won't necessarily be based on their own productions. Other films that are very cutting edge but not animation also interest them.

Manga has no intention of competing with Disney. Their eventual



Angel Cop

© Manga Entertainment

aim is to combine Western style scripts with Japanese graphics, to reach the *Independence Day-Terminator-Blade Runner* audience. Preece sees lots of potential in westernizing this Asian export, breaking it out into the mainstream. "These

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**Preece sees lots of potential in westernizing this Asian export, breaking it out into the mainstream.**

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are still productions aimed at the domestic Japanese audience. They are action-packed, but the storytelling is very Japanese—you've got 17 words where an American script would have 3. Action breaks off for philosophical discussions." He worries that the specter of Hiroshima hovers over an inordinate number of stories. "I think we could give it a

more Western style without detracting from the Japanese feel—it wouldn't look like a Hollywood film, but it would move in that way, storywise.

Hollywood movies have worldwide appeal, so why not anime? Manga keeps looking for that breakthrough, experimenting to find the key to Western mass-market appeal for this Eastern import. They have made a good start with titles that should appeal to teenage boys. Can they keep expanding that audience? Preece is confident they can.

"What you see in *Ghost in the Shell* is almost there. Rest assured that in the next two or three years we're going to team up with even bigger partners than we worked with on *Ghost*—and a fully Japanese-produced feature film, aimed at world audiences, is going to hit, with parts voiced by big name stars."

*Mark Segall has won awards for labor journalism and public service copywriting. He co-authored How To Make Love To Your Money (Delacorte, 1982) with his wife, Margaret Tobin. This fall, he will become Editor of ASIFA-East's aNYmator newsletter, which he currently designs and is a regular contributor.*

# Anime in Europe

by John Gosling

When looking for a common thread to link this article, I was struck by how often anime had ran foul of censorship in Europe, a problem that is certainly something of a sore point with fans here in Britain due to the many cuts imposed on videos by the British Board Of Film Classification (BBFC). To briefly explain the role of the BBFC, its examiners view and then assign certificates to all the films and videos shown in Britain. These certificates place legal age limits on who can watch a film, and range from a "U" for Universal to an "18" for anything of a strictly adult nature. I should point out that an "18" does not equate to the American "X" rating, which is often synonymous with pornography. The BBFC is also able to demand cuts and modifications to bring a film into the realms of public decency and can refuse a



UFO Robot Grandizer

certificate completely if deemed necessary.

Naturally the board has long been at the center of controversy regarding issues of personal freedom, and in recent years anime has come very much to the forefront of that debate; but before we delve deeper into the situation in Britain,

let us begin with a brief overview of anime in mainland Europe, from where it began, to where it stands at present.

## Spain & France

There are a number of European countries where anime enjoys a much broader exposure than in Britain; however, things got off to a difficult start when early imports of television shows came up against local opposition to their content, which, even if made for children, often took a far more relaxed attitude to mature themes than broadcasters and parents were used to. A case in point was the giant robot show *Mazinger Z* (*TranZor Z* in America), which in 1980 was picked up for broadcast in Spain by Television Española (TVE), but was discontinued after only 26 episodes because the broadcasters judged it was too violent. The problem is a familiar dichotomy to anime fans wishing to see the genre expand its appeal. Broadcasters are thrust into a state of confusion, equating cartoons with children, but unable to place anime comfortably in this niche. A similar fate befell *Saint Seiya*, a series based on the manga of Masami Kurumada, and which took inspiration from both Greek and Norse mythology. However, *Saint Seiya* got a second chance when the entire series was broadcast by another Spanish channel, Tele-S, and this time the flame caught and started a fire. Now it is possible to see an incredibly broad range of anime on Spanish television, includ-



Patlabor

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ing shows that have almost legendary status with Western fans, such as *Lupin III*, *Kimagure Orange Road*, *Touch*, *City Hunter*, *Ranma 1/2* and *Maison Ikkoku*. As an interesting aside, the degree of tampering appears to vary with regions in Spain, hence in the Catalan region you can see the *Dragonball* series with its original titles intact, while in the rest of the country the show goes out in an edited format.

In France, anime has had a particularly rough ride. The first anime to reach the country was *Ribbon No Kishi* (Princess Knight), translated as *Le Prince Saphir*, and *Jungle Taitei* (Jungle Emperor) as *Le Roi Leo*, both from the fertile imagination of manga and anime genius Osamu Tezuka.

These appeared in 1974 and I can't imagine caused any great stir; but things really heated up in more ways than one in the late 70s. First of all, the series *UFO Robot Grandizer* was broadcast in 1978 as *Goldorak* and, like *Saint Seiya* in Spain, was the catalyst for a boom in anime imports, as it apparently was the most watched program on television at the time. However, during this period a French psychologist also wrote an article which warned of the danger to young children of watching "violent" Japanese cartoons. This event has real parallels with the work of Dr.



**Bounty Dog**  
© Manga Entertainment

Frederick Wertham, the psychologist who created a considerable panic in the early 1950s amongst American parents when he proposed a link between delinquency and the horror comic books popu-

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**Broadcasters, equating cartoons with children, are unable to place anime comfortably in this niche.**

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larized by publisher EC. A similar hysteria was to be whipped up in France, and in much the same way as America came up with the Comics Code Authority (CCA) to reg-

ulate comics, so France was to have its CSA, or Comité de Surveillance Audiovisuel. The CSA set to work cutting the violence from shows such as *Hokuto No Ken* (*Fist Of The Northstar*). Although you can reasonably argue the merits of such a move, worse was to come when the government enacted a law banning advertisements during cartoons.

Again, this had a worthy ideal, but the response of broadcasters was to use the CSA guidelines to savagely cut anime (not just violence and nudity) to make room for more adverts before and after the programs; this was a rather blatant way of getting round the new law, but one that apparently went unchallenged. Another way in which anime is tampered with in France relates to a further law which stipulates that daily indigenous programming must outnumber imported shows. As a re-

sult, many shows are crudely cut down to half their normal length, and broadcasters have commissioned new and poorly animated opening sequences, with new "theme songs," so that they can qualify as locally made.

### Germany & Italy

**G**ermany has an increasingly strong base of fandom, but anime has had to struggle to overcome the concerns of parents and there has not yet been a *Saint Seiya* or *UFO Robot Grandizer* to create mass appeal. The first anime show to reach West Ger-

many was *Mach Go Go Go* (*Speed Racer*) in the early 1970s; but this was branded "brutal" by parents and removed after only a few episodes. One of the more interesting shows to reach German TV in 1980 was *Captain Future*, based on the books of American science-fiction writer Edmond Hamilton, though this too came in for criticism and was cut. However, many subsequent imports tended toward safe material aimed at young girls, such as *Heidi*, though even this came under attack, when with others of this type, it was labeled in the German press as a "cheap Far East cartoon." However, things do seem to have improved lately, with shows such as the renowned *shoji* (girls) series *Rose Of Versailles* making an appearance in the last 12 months, alongside a flurry of sports based anime, such as *Ganbare! Kickers* and *Attack No. 1*.

Italy has perhaps the most relaxed attitude to anime and apparently the best approach in Europe to dubbing. Since 1973, Italian television has shown an astounding number of shows, with Go Nagai's *UFO Robot Grandizer* once again the forefront. Following on from this has come virtually every major show and format, from the top rated giant robot saga *Gundam*, to Leiji Matsumoto's *Galaxy Express 999* and a bevy of "magical girl" shows, such as *Minky Momo* and *Magical Emy*.

### Back in the UK

In the UK, we have no history of anime on television to speak of, and indeed British TV has always

walked a careful line in regards to children's programming. For example, the title of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* was changed to

**Many shows are crudely cut down to half their normal length, and broadcasters have commissioned new and poorly animated opening sequences, with new "theme songs."**

*Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles*, because the word Ninja had connotations which were felt to be unsuitable for children. Nor does Britain have much in the way of a comic book culture such as in Spain, which I am sure has worked in parallel to help ease anime into the mainstream on the continent. In our



**Macross Plus**  
© Manga Entertainment

somewhat repressed climate, the arrival of anime on video took the BBFC completely by surprise.

What has amounted to a video invasion was launched in 1991 by Manga Video, a subsidiary of Island World. They had tested the waters with Katsuhiro Otomo's sensational cyberpunk film *Akira*, and such was its success that they formed a new dedicated label called Manga Video.

Unfortunately, the company has had a fairly acrimonious relationship with "anime fans," not least because purists objected to the use of "manga" in connection with an anime label, when everyone knows that it refers to Japanese comic books. The real problems, though, began when Manga Video started to release titles in earnest, beginning with some fairly extreme material guaranteed to kick up a stink. The horror story *Urotsukidoji* did just this, earning an 18 certificate and giving the poor examiner nightmares for days after.

The British press was quick to pick up on the film and several disparaging articles appeared, notably one in *The Independent*; but there has been no great anti-anime crusade in this country, and the only real disappointment is that the extreme films have overshadowed the true depth and vision of which anime is capable.

However, along with some rather dubious dubbing practices, these negative factors combined to create something of a schism between "manga" fans and "anime" fans; indeed, the mere mention of the company's name at anime conventions tends to

evoke calls of derision. This seems to be healing a little now, especially as Manga has since released some classics with wide appeal like *Patlabor* and *Wings Of Honneamise*. Meanwhile, the BBFC continue to tread a careful path, having recently refused for the first time to issue a certificate to a video, in this case Manga's *La Blue Girl*.





*The Winds of Honneamise*  
© Manga Entertainment

## Redressing the Balance

Other companies, such as Kiseki, have tried to redress the balance by releasing softer material, but one unfortunate side effect of the massive spending power of Manga Video is that most shops are still to this day displaying their anime titles beneath Manga's point-of-sale displays. Journalists outside the anime press made (and still) make no distinction between what is on the shelf, tending to reinforce the idea that anime = sex and violence; and in my opinion few of those buying Manga titles in the early days were especially interested in the fact that the films originated in Japan, as long as there was plenty of the aforementioned sex and violence.

Of course, most continental viewers started out in much the same state of ignorance. It can't have helped, for instance, that Kei And Yuri of the *Dirty Pair* TV series became Kate and Julie in Italy and *Maison Ikkoku's* Kyoko became Juliette in France.

I had rather hoped that, as with

other European countries, we in Britain might next see a manga explosion, which in turn would stimulate interest in a broader range of anime. However, despite the success of one publisher with a manga project called *Iron Fist Chinmi* aimed at children (100,000 sold) there is

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**The film earned an 18 certificate and gave the poor examiner nightmares for days after.**

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no sign yet that this has opened the floodgates. Meanwhile, just as happened in Japan during the 1980s, films made directly for video is going where television fears to tread; rather than pushing the bounds of storytelling, the trend is somewhat more basic in intent, with Manga Video launching an "adult" label in Spain and erotic anime are selling very well in France.

On a more positive note, anime is expanding elsewhere in Europe, with Hayao Miyazaki's *Porco Rosso* and *My Neighbor Totoro* getting

television premieres in Finland and at least 50 titles made available on video. *Porco Rosso*, considered a masterpiece by many, has also been dubbed and shown on Polish TV.

In the last year, the first tentative signs of interest from British television have appeared, with Channel 4, a broadcaster with a broad alternative mandate, running several late night anime seasons—though completely dominated by Manga product. Rather more hopeful for a balanced approach is the news that the BBC has purchased both *Patlabor* and *Wings Of Honneamise*. Nevertheless, Britain remains rather the odd man out in Europe, as it does in most things, so no one is expecting to see something like the delightful love story, *Kimagure Orange Road* in the BBC children's broadcast slot for a long time to come.

*John Gosling is a freelance writer living in England. His major credits include numerous anime video reviews for the magazine MangaMania and an article on the use of factual space concepts in anime for Spaceflight, the journal of the British Interplanetary Society.*

# The Hidden World of Anime

by John Gosling

This article aims to scratch away a little of the paint and peek beneath the acetate to see what makes anime so different from Western animation, but rather than cover the usual ground, I want to take this opportunity to speculate on some of the more unusual possibilities for cultural influences on anime, starting with the rich legacy of theater.

The *kage-e*, or shadow puppets of the 17th century are one obvious precursor of Japanese animation. Indeed, pioneer animator Noboro Ofuji worked in silhouette animation for much of his life. His most ambitious work was probably the 70 minute shadow film *Shaka no Shogai (The Life Of Buddha, 1961)*.

## Joruri & Kabuki

Another probable antecedent is the *joruri*, or puppet theater, now more commonly called *bunraku*, after the name of the Osaka theater that by 1909 was the only remaining venue for performances. For a time, though, *joruri* was more popular than kabuki, with the dolls acquiring all manner of refinements during the 1730s, such as moveable eyes and articulated fingers. The dolls also came to measure some 1.2 meters in height, which required three men to operate. It is not easy to show a direct connection, as the puppet theater was on the decline well



UFO Robot Grandizer

before the advent of filmed animation; but the artistic roots are undoubtedly there, and Ofuji was working with three dimensional puppets in the 1930s. Kihachiro Kawamoto also produced a great many outstanding puppet films in his career, such as *Demon (1972)* and *House Of Flame (1979)*.

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**After the Second World War, many kabuki actors made the transition to film and television.**

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Certainly you can spot *joruri*-like puppets in modern anime. In the second *Vampire Princess Miyu* OAV, "Puppet Festival," a young man is turned into a puppet by a demon with whom he has fallen in love. You can also see *joruri* puppets brought to life in the *3x3 Eyes* OAV (original animation video) episode called "The Descendent."

As for the influence of kabuki,

just watch an anime character giving a speech or monologue and you will often see that the whole body is used to express his or her sentiments. The character assumes a series of stylized and exaggerated postures, which in spirit echoes the philosophy of the kabuki actor, who from an early age is trained in dance and other techniques to use the entire body as a medium of expression. It seems unlikely that animators are making a conscious effort to mimic kabuki, but keep in mind that after the Second World War, many kabuki actors made the transition to film and television. Clearly, they would have had to tone down their performances, but I suspect that enough of the essence of their art leaked through to influence the early pioneers in television and film animation.

I can offer further evidence to support my argument by taking another element of anime which is almost universal to every production and comparing it to a key component of kabuki. I refer to the *mie*, which is the climatic moment in a kabuki play when the leading player strikes and holds a dramatic pose with crossed eyes, often to the rapturous applause of the audience. There is another version of the *mie* called the *kimari*, which is essentially the same thing without the crossed eyes, and I propose that you can see something similar tak-



ing place in most anime productions. Pay particular attention to the opening credits (especially those anime which feature a group of heroes) and you can't fail to miss the posing and posturing that takes place. Good examples can be found in the opening credits of *Otaku no Video* (in fact it goes on all the time in this OAV), *Gunbuster* and *Moldiver*.

To stretch a point, it is perhaps worth speculating that the comic interludes called *kyogen* (mad words), which were sometime performed between *noh* plays and have since become a theater form in their own right, may have had some parallel in the little humorous skits that occasionally are featured at the end of anime productions. I can immediately think of at least three distinct examples, and there are undoubtedly others. To see what I mean, take a look at *Video Girl Ai*, *Gunbuster* again, and *Blue Seed*.

### Modern Influences

So what about more modern influences? Let's start by looking at the role of women in anime. By this I mean the female characters who populate the stories, because with few exceptions, Japanese women have yet to make an impact behind the camera, unless of course you count painting cels. There are, however, an incredible number of strong female characters in anime, so many in fact



*Ultimate Teacher.*

© Atsuji Yamamoto/Tokuma Shoten/MOVIC/Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) Inc. English Language Version ©1993 Manga Entertainment Ltd.

that there must be some specific reason. It certainly can't be a manifestation of women's lib, because in Japan there are an awful lot of lift ladies with university degrees. To understand why it is that women are so often key characters in anime, I think you have to look at the Japanese home, and specifically the relationship between children and their mothers, particularly male children and their mothers.

**Perhaps better than looking for excuses, it is simpler to admit that sex sells.**

Lets imagine how it might be for a boy (lets call him Kyosuke) growing up in Japan. His father is a salary-man, up at the crack of dawn for the daily commute, and back late at night after entertaining his business contacts at a karaoke bar. There is no male role model in Kyosuke's life, and so the emphasis shifts to his mother. It is she who packs Kyosuke off to school, solves his problems, dries his tears and keeps the pressure up for exam success. In a climate where women call their seldom seen husbands "oversize garbage" and "wet leaves," because they stick to everything and are hard to sweep up, is it any wonder that boys fixate on their mothers and make them super heroines?

Of course, there also exists an equally large school of animation that treats female characters disgracefully. Terms like

"Lolita complex" are frequently cited, and I am sure a psychologist could find many reasons for the contradictory portrayal of women in anime, but perhaps better than looking for excuses it is simpler to admit that sex sells.

### School Days

Let us return to our original thread now, and add a sister for Kyosuke; we can call her Akane. If we follow them to school we can uncover yet more cultural influences that have crept into anime. For example, if Akane has

hair that is not the typical black of most Japanese, she may be required to bring a letter to school from her mother confirming it has not been dyed. I think it not unreasonable to assume that the reason you see so many anime characters with hair that is anything but black, may well hark back to these draconian school days and a deep desire to be blond. This is a hard argument to support as most animators are male and were probably not so worried in their youth about putting highlights in their hair, but a lot of anime now is based on *shou-jo* (girls) manga, and oddly colored hair is just as prevalent. What I can say with confidence, is that most animators had a really bad time at school, because in no other art form do you see so many schools getting blown up, burnt down, trampled by monsters and in general spectacularly trashed.

There may be cause for grievance, as Japanese schools are anything but relaxed, and in admittedly extreme examples, children have been killed or injured by overzealous teachers in the cause of discipline.

Rather bizarrely, there is a sub-genre which seems to exult in portraying Japanese schools as places of torture and degradation, most notably those stories from the pen of manga artist Go Nagai, who essentially created the movement with his *Harenchi Gakuen* (Shameless School) stories and took it to its

**There are, however, an incredible number of strong female characters in anime, so many in fact that there must be some specific reason.**

zenith in the rather unpleasant *Kekkou Kamen*. There are any number of anime productions that take a similar tack, such as *Be Bop High School* and *Ultimate Teacher*.



*Vampire Princess Miyu*

© 1988 Soeishinsha Inc./Pony Canyon Ltd. English Language version: ©1996 Manga Entertainment Ltd.

## Matters of Technology

Assuming he survives, we now follow Kyosuke on to university, where we might discover some curious motivations in the area of career choice. One of the more fascinating aspects of anime is the way it has become entwined with the Japanese obsession with technology. In researching this aspect, I have spoken to one Japanese university student who was motivated to get into robotics because he liked robot animation and he is probably not alone. Japanese society has undergone two major upheavals because of

technology, both at the hands of a foreign power.

The first was in 1853 when the American Navy brought to a close Japan's 200 year period of self-imposed isolation. The second came with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In both cases Japan bounced back from defeat and embraced the superior technology of their enemy as a way to match and surpass them. The very idea that Japan would

embrace atomic energy may seem strange, but one need only look to the work of Osamu Tezuka to see how quickly atomic energy was given a friendly face in Japan. Tezuka was the creator of *Tetsuwan Atomu* (Mighty Atom), a manga about a robot boy who used his powers to right wrongs and protect the innocent. In 1963, it became Japan's

first domestically produced anime TV series, made under Tezuka's supervision.

*Tetsuwan Atomu* was just the beginning. Science fiction became the predominant force in anime during the 70s and 80s, and the robots (or *mecha* as they are called) rapidly got bigger and better, eventually reaching the stage where people (and especially children) were able to climb inside and pilot them. Perhaps there is something comforting about being cocooned in a form-fitting machine or mechanized body armor, especially for the Japanese, who have staked so



much of their future on technology. Certainly anime such as *Patlabor* (Giant Police Robots) radiate a feeling of kinship and loyalty between man and machine that I find highly motivating; and one need only look at the way Japan is forging ahead in the technological arena to see how anime is in tune with developing trends. It is perhaps significant that Japan is the only country in the world seriously interested in bipedal robot research, and when you look at the walking, running and leaping robots of anime, you can perhaps understand why. There may never be such machines in reality, but don't tell the Japanese that.

So here I conclude this brief preamble through the hidden world of anime. Some of you might think it

**There is something comforting about being cocooned in a form-fitting machine.**

has been more fancy than fact, but anime has roots that run deeper than anything you will find in a Disney film. Anime stories still feature ghosts and monsters of myth and legend, and temples and traditional religion figures prominently, often quite comfortably intertwined with science fiction. With anime, not only do you get the feeling that you are looking at something with a heritage, but something that is continuing to evolve, responding to the changes in society and attempting to weave a consensus between the old and new. Long may this continue.

*John Gosling is a freelance writer living in England. His major credits include numerous anime video reviews for the magazine MangaMania and an article on the use of factual space concepts in anime for Spaceflight, the journal of the British Interplanetary Society.*

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# Raoul Servais: An Interview

by Philippe Moins

Translated by Annick Teninge

**R**aoul Servais, whose presence in the animation world cannot be ignored, is scheduled to be the Honorary President of this year's Hiroshima International Animation Festival. A painter and filmmaker, Servais studied at the Royal Academy of Arts in Gand, Belgium. In the 1950s, he worked with painter René Magritte and documentary filmmaker Henri Stork. His films have won more than 40 national and international awards, among them the First Prize at Venice Biennial in 1966, the Jury Grand Prize in Cannes in 1971 and the Palme d'Or in Cannes in 1979.

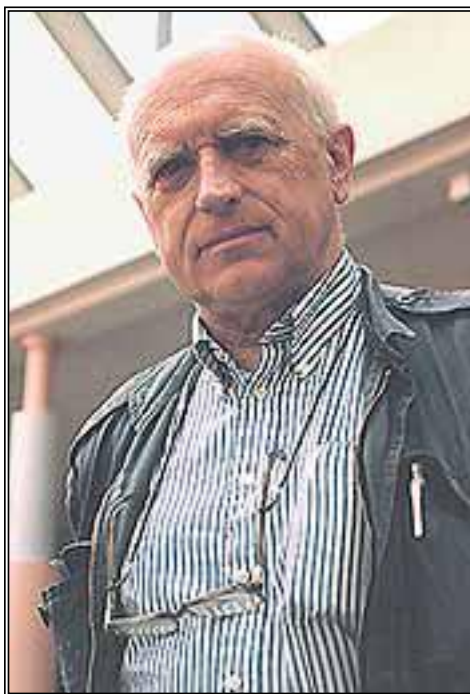
In addition to his filmmaking activities, Servais started the Animation Department of Gand Royal Academy of Arts, as well as its Animation Study Center. He has also been involved with the Raoul Servais' Foundation, which is also located in Gand, which organizes animation courses for elementary and middle schools. From 1985 to 1994, he served as President of ASIFA-International, the international animation association.

Currently, after the long gestation period required for his first feature film, *Taxandria*, Servais has returned to his first love, short films.

I recently had a talk about this and that with this wise practitioner.

**Moins:** How did it happen to that you got involved in animation in a country where there were no animation studios?

**Servais:** It was not by chance. I contracted an early virus, thanks to my father; he was an amateur film-



Raoul Servais

Courtesy of Raoul Servais

maker who used to screen a 9.5mm print of a Felix the Cat cartoon at home. I used to unwind the print without his knowledge and glance through the frames to try to understand the mystery of animation. It is this miracle of the inanimate which becomes the motion picture, the magic of the cinematograph which made me decide me, at the age of 5, to become a filmmaker.

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**The images remains alive and don't suffer from the coldness usually associated with full digitalization.**

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**Moins:** Your filmography shows a great eclecticism in terms techniques.

**Servais:** I mostly made cartoons, but I often changed my drawing style in order to create new experi-

ences. For *Harpya*, I brought in a human/real character by including him in a painted setting, and handled him like a drawing. This real character was composited with different techniques. I also created an optical system inspired by front projection. For *Taxandria*, I created a system I call the Servaisgraphie, though, for various reasons, it was only used for the sets. The compositing itself was done using computers. Unless I am mistaken, until *Toy Story*, *Taxandria* used more digital images than any other feature film.

**Moins:** What sort of themes do you deal with in your films?

**Servais:** I deal with various themes, but what they all have in common is mankind, his longing for freedom, peace and justice. I have always tried to emphasize the dangers which threaten humans. Despite the many script revisions *Taxandria* went through, the basic message has been retained: a warning against intolerance and authoritarian ideology.

**Moins:** *Taxandria* will be previewed at Hiroshima, but, in fact, it is not an animated film?

**Servais:** In a way, *Taxandria* went off in a different direction than I had originally planned. At first, I thought about making an animated film using live action, as I started to experiment with in *Harpya*. But the producers turned this option towards a more realistic way, a live-action movie using some animation.





*Taxandria* by Raoul Servais (1996)  
© BIBO TV

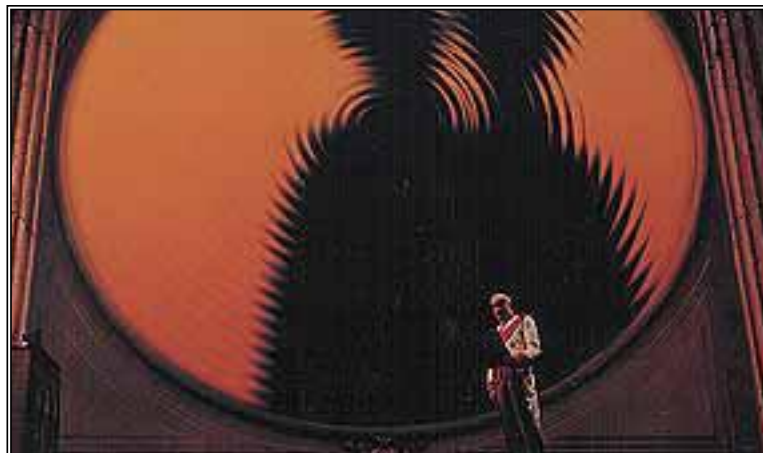
They had a lot of experience with live action and did not feel very confident about animation. This is the reason why I do not ask for the sole authorship for the film. But it does not mean that it is not an important movie. The production had many ups and downs and we had to revise the script several times. *Taxandria* has had a noticeable success and has already won several prizes (in Porto among others), but it is mainly screened in art houses. People usually appreciate the fact that they don't notice the use of the computer. The images remain alive and don't suffer from the coldness usually associated with full digitalization.

**Moins:** Why did you switch to feature films?

**Servais:** Many people think that a short film director who makes a

feature film comes out of puberty. This is especially true if you speak about live action, but I don't share this opinion. I made a feature because the script I wrote was too long to be done as a short. A feature-length film was an artistic necessity. [However] while making it, I knew that I would subsequently go back to doing shorts.

**Moins:** What would you like to say to experienced animators who want to make a feature film?



*Taxandria* by Raoul Servais (1996)  
© BIBO TV

**Servais:** First of all, be sure that the producer knows and likes animation. You can find very good producers who are not mad about animation. When you are used to working as an independent filmmaker working alone or with a small team, you have to learn to delegate, which may be difficult for someone who is used to wearing many hats. You have to have a true dialogue between the director and his team; it is a habit one has to acquire. For a short, it is easy to supervise the whole thing, but sometimes with a feature, one may get lost in the details and not remain in control of the whole. This is the main danger.

**Moins:** You are a big festival fan. How many times have you been to Hiroshima?



*Sirène (1968)*

**Servais:** I never counted! I attended all the Annecy festivals since they started, except for one. I did Mamaia every time, almost all the Zagrebs except the last two, almost all Varna, two Ottawas, but this only my second visit to Hiroshima.

**Moins:** Do you remember the first animation festival you ever went to?

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**Some festivals have become so big that they have lost a good part of their friendliness and become a little impersonal.**

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**Servais:** It was the first Annecy Festival, which was the only one at the time. I remember it perfectly, because I was a little disappointed. I had submitted a film to the selection committee and it was only when I came to Annecy did I learn that it was not picked. A few months later, my film (*Chromophobia*) won the Lion de St. Marc at Venice.

**Moins:** Since you have begun going to festivals, what changes have you noticed?

**Servais:** Mainly a quantitative change. There are many festivals now and in each of them there are always more films in competition, in retrospectives, etc. This is rather surprising, as the short film situation is always getting worse. Maybe the increase is due to the greater number of animation schools. The percentage of student films is very high in animation festivals. Somehow, I regret this increase in the number of festivals; some of them have become so big that they have lost a good part of their friendliness and become a little impersonal.

**Moins:** What is your impression of Hiroshima?

**Servais:** From now on, I can only talk about the first one,

which pleasantly surprised me: a perfect organization, many people, well-done programs—for a first edition, it was a total success.

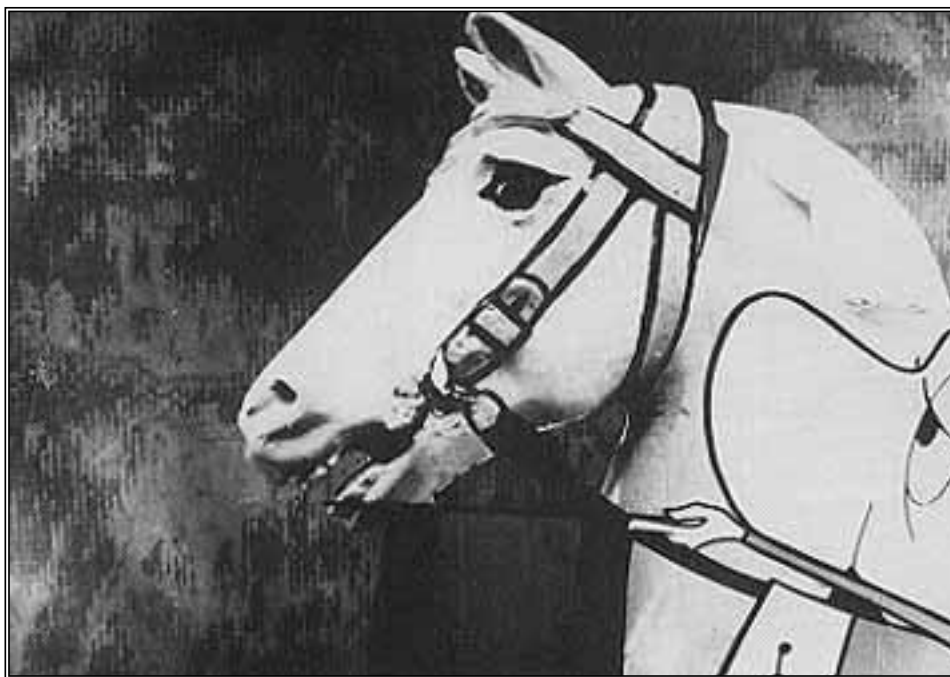
**Moins:** You have met many of the giants of animation history: Norman McLaren, Paul Grimault, etc. Which one made the strongest impression?

**Servais:** That's a difficult question. Many of them made a strong impression upon me. McLaren wrote something very nice about one of my films. I had a very friendly relationship with him although we only met 3 or 4 times. I can say that Paul Grimault was my friend. I remember the 14 days we spent together in Japan when he was the Honorary President of the Hiroshima Festival. Karel Zeman really moved



*Harpya (1979)*





*La Fausse Note* (1963)

me, I got on well with him in Teheran. We discovered that we were using the same type of camera and we exchanged some tips. He really liked what I was doing and the feeling was mutual. We had the same approach to the animated film, going beyond the cartoon and try to incorporate live action in animation, what he did so brilliantly in his *Invention of Destruction*. Bretislav Pojar is a very close friend, he comes to my home and I go to his, he is such a lovely guy.

One could also mention Frédéric Back who I greatly admire. We correspond regularly. He is so modest and so talented. More recently, I had a nice meeting with John Lasseter. And also with Ivanov Vano, Fedor Khitruk, who I have met quite often; but I will not name everybody ...

**Moins:** Which lessons did you draw from your nine years as head of ASIFA?

**Servais:** The presidency of ASIFA is a lot of work. Fate willed that this happened at the same time as I was

doing my feature film. I was not totally free to take care of ASIFA. I have been helped by Nicole Salomon, who was an excellent secretary general. I have realized the strength of ASIFA in [facilitating] international contacts and relationships, as well as its major weakness: the lack of funding.

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**This phenomenon has disappeared and contributed to the marginalization of the short film.**

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**Moins:** Now you are going back to short films?

**Servais:** Yes, I have started a new film, called *Papillons de nuit* (Butterflies of the Night). It is made in Servaisgraphie, the compositing technique that I devised for *Taxandria*. It is a tribute to the Belgium surrealist painter Paul Delvaux. If everything goes well, it will be completed within the course of the next year. Then, I have other projects in my portfolio.

**Moins:** What would you say to young professionals who dream of making their own short films?

**Servais:** If they really want to do one, then they should. But they should not underestimate the major problems they will encounter. If they do it thinking that they will make money, then they should give up on the idea right away.

**Moins:** Is it easier today than when you started at the end of the fifties ?

**Servais:** Yes and no. Yes, because today there are many animation schools, lots of technical literature, and the real possibility of taking a training course in a studio. When I started, there were no schools. We can say that in Europe, it was totally disconcerting to enter a studio; what happened in there was almost "top secret." We almost exclusively taught ourselves. I was 10 or 15 years behind everybody else. At the Gand Academy, where I taught, my students learned in 3 months what I had acquired in 10 years. On the other hand, when I started, if someone succeeded in making a short film, there was every chance that it would be shown in movie theaters. This type of programming was common. This phenomenon has totally disappeared and contributed greatly to the marginalization of the short film .

**Moins:** What are your favorites among current productions?

**Servais:** Frédéric Back and his last film, *The Mighty River*, thrilled me to bits. It is a documentary, but there is so much skill in the drawing; I am astounded to see that he did it with a pencil on cels. Computers will never equal this man. We can definitely say that Frédéric Back is a genius.



*Chromophobia* (1966)

**Moins:** And what don't you like?

**Servais:** [Sigh] I can't bear Disney clones. Unfortunately, there have been all too many. I also hate computer films when they are made by good technicians who do not have any artistic sensitivity. Fortunately, we have started to turn the corner in this area.

**Moins:** What is the future for animated film ?

**Servais:** I am not a prophet. I think that the computer will inevitably play a part, a positive one, as it allows one to do things which were not workable before. We will certainly be able to avoid this lack of personality characteristic of com-

puter images. More and more, filmmakers will get into it. Unfortunately, this will be to the detriment of labor. Many people will lose their job in such tasks as inking, coloring, inbetweening ... Socially speaking, this development is rather sad.

## Raoul Servais Filmography

### Live-Action Films

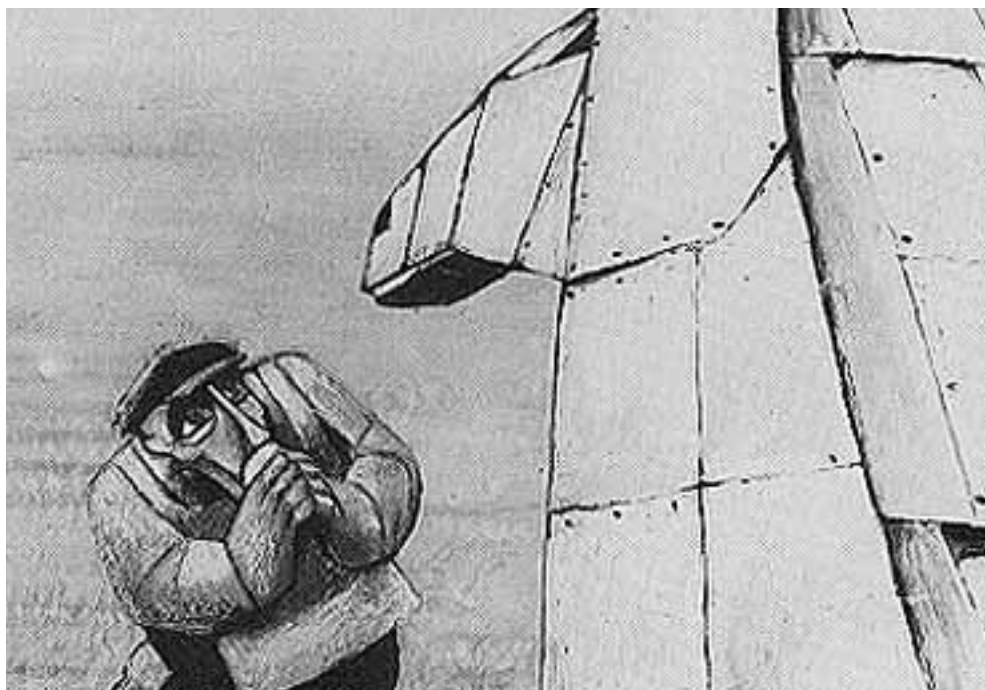
- *Omleiding November* (November Diversion), 1962

### Animated Films

- *Havenlichten* (Harbor Lights), 1960
- *De Valse noot* (The False Note), 1963
- *Chromophobia*, 1966
- *Sirène*, 1968
- *Goldframe*, 1969
- *To Speak Or Not To Speak*, 1970
- *Operation X-70*, 1971
- *Pegasus*, 1973
- *Halewyn*, 1976

### Special Effects Films

- *Harpya*, 1979
- *Taxandria*, 1995



*Pegasus* (1973)

*Philippe Moins is the founder of the Brussels Festival of Cartoons and Animated Films. A writer specializing in animation based in Brussels, he was Editor-in-Chief of ASIFA News (published by ASIFA-International), and is now Editor of La Gazette du Loup, a quarterly newsletter on animation.*



# Interview de Raoul Servais

par Philippe Moins

**F**igure incontournable du cinéma d'animation mondial, Raoul Servais sera cette année Président d'honneur du Festival d'Hiroshima. Peintre et cinéaste, Raoul Servais a fait ses études à l'Académie Royale des Beaux Arts de Gand durant les années 50. Il a travaillé avec René Magritte et Henri Stork. Ses films ont remporté plus de quarante distinctions internationales et nationales dont le premier Prix à la Biennale de Venise en 1966, le Grand Prix du Jury à Cannes en 1971 et la Palme d'Or à Cannes en 1979.

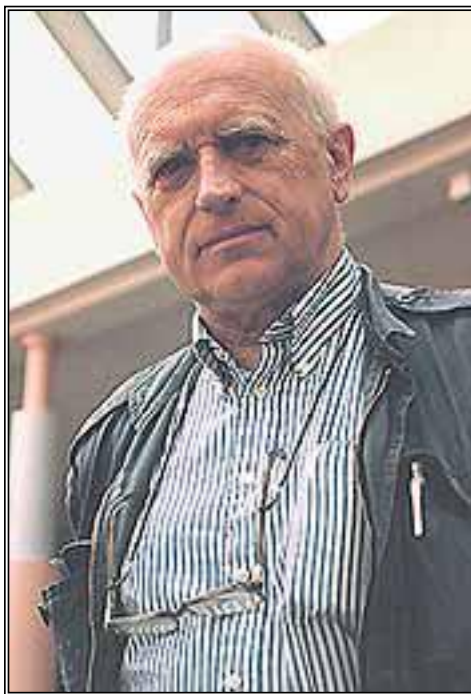
Il est le fondateur de la section animation à l'Académie royale des Beaux-Arts de Gand et du Centre d'étude du cinéma d'animation. En outre, la Fondation Raoul Servais, également située à Gand, s'occupe de l'initiation au cinéma d'animation auprès des écoles de l'enseignement inférieur et moyen. De 1985 à 1994, Raoul Servais a présidé l'ASIFA (Association internationale du film d'animation).

Après la longue gestation de son long métrage *Taxandria*, Servais s'est remis à son genre de prédilection, le court métrage.

Conversation à bâtons rompus avec un sage et un praticien.

**Moins:** Par quel hasard avez-vous démarré dans l'animation, dans un pays où aucun studio n'existait?

**Servais:** Ce n'est pas un hasard. J'ai contracté un virus précoce, grâce à mon père qui était cinéaste amateur et projetait à la maison des Félix le Chat en 9,5mm. À l'insu de mon père, je déroulais les bobines de film



Raoul Servais  
Courtesy of Raoul Servais

et parcourais les photogrammes pour comprendre le mystère de l'animation. C'est ce miracle de l'inanimé qui devient mouvement, cette magie du cinématographe, qui m'ont décidé... à l'âge de cinq ans, de choisir ce métier de cinéaste d'animation.

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**L'image reste vivante et ne souffre pas de la froideur propre à la digitalisation complète.**

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**Moins:** La liste de vos films révèle un grand éclectisme dans le choix des techniques?

**Servais:** J'ai surtout pratiqué le dessin animé mais j'ai toujours changé de style graphique afin de pratiquer de nouvelles expériences. À partir de *Harpya*, j'ai introduit le personnage réel en l'intégrant dans

un décor peint, en le manipulant comme s'il s'agissait de dessins. Cette incrustation de personnages réels s'est faite avec des techniques différentes. Pour *Harpya* j'avais mis au point un système optique inspiré du "front projection." Pour *Taxandria* j'ai mis au point un système qui s'appelait la "Servaisgraphie". Pour diverses raisons, il n'a été retenu que pour la confection des décors. L'incrustation s'est faite par ordinateur. Sauf erreur, *Taxandria* était, jusqu'à *Toy Story*, le long métrage incluant le plus d'images numériques.

**Moins:** Parlez-nous des thèmes que vous traitez?

**Servais:** Les sujets que je traite sont variés, mais leur préoccupation commune c'est l'être humain, ses aspirations de liberté, de paix, de justice. J'ai toujours voulu souligner les dangers qui menacent la race humaine. Malgré les multiples remaniements du scénario de *Taxandria*, le message de mon film a été préservé: une mise en garde contre l'intolérance et l'idéologie autoritariste.

**Moins:** *Taxandria* sera montré en avant première au Festival d'Hiroshima. En fait, ce n'est pas un film d'animation?

**Servais:** *Taxandria* sort quelque peu de la route que je m'étais tracée. J'avais au départ pensé faire un film d'animation en utilisant des prises de vues réelles, un peu comme je l'avais expérimenté dans *Harpya*. Mais les producteurs ont fait dévier



*Taxandria* by Raoul Servais (1996)  
© BIBO TV

cette option vers une formule plus réaliste, à savoir un film en vues réelles utilisant parfois l'animation. Les producteurs avaient une grande expérience du "live action" et éprouvaient une certaine méfiance à l'égard de l'animation. Pour cette raison, je ne réclame pas l'entière paternité du film, mais je pense que cela n'empêche pas qu'il soit important. Les nombreux aléas de la production, qui s'est étalée sur plusieurs années, nous ont contraints à remanier le scénario à plusieurs reprises. Cela dit, *Taxandria* connaît un succès appréciable. Il a déjà obtenu plusieurs prix (notamment à Porto), mais il est surtout diffusé dans les salles de type "art et essai". En général, on apprécie le fait que l'utilisation de l'ordinateur ne se perçoit pas. L'image reste vivante et ne souffre pas de la froideur propre à la digitalisation complète.

**Moins:** Pourquoi êtes-vous passé au long métrage?

**Servais:** Nombreux sont ceux qui pensent que faire un long, pour un réalisateur d'animation, c'est un peu comme sortir de la puberté. Dans le cas de la prise de vues réelles, c'est effectivement le cas. Quant à moi, je n'ai pas du tout ce sentiment: j'ai fait un long métrage parce que le scénario que j'avais écrit ne pouvait se satisfaire de la durée d'un court métrage. Le long métrage était une nécessité artistique. Je savais déjà au moment où je le réalisais qu'ensuite je retournerais au court métrage.

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**This phenomenon has disappeared and contributed to the marginalization of the short film.**

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**Moins:** Qu'avez-vous envie de dire aux réalisateurs d'animation confirmés qui veulent se lancer dans un long métrage?

**Servais:** D'abord s'assurer que le

producteur connaît l'animation et aime l'animation. Parce qu'il peut y avoir de très bons producteurs de cinéma qui ne sont pas nécessairement mordus par l'animation. Quand on a une expérience d'auteur indépendant, que l'on travaille seul ou en toute petite équipe, il faut apprendre à déléguer, ce qui est parfois difficile car on a eu l'habitude d'être "homme orchestre". Un vrai dialogue doit s'établir entre le réalisateur et ses collaborateurs. C'est une habitude qu'il faut acquérir. Pour un court métrage, il est facile de surplomber l'ensemble. Parfois dans un long métrage, on a tendance à se perdre dans les détails. On risque dès lors de perdre le contrôle de l'ensemble, c'est le danger majeur.

**Moins:** Vous êtes un assidu des festivals d'animation. Hiroshima est le quantième, pour vous?

**Servais:** Je n'ai jamais fait le calcul! J'ai assisté à tous les festivals





*Sirène (1968)*

d'Annecy, à une exception près, depuis sa création. J'ai "fait" Mamaia chaque fois, Zagreb presque chaque fois sauf les deux dernières années, quasi tous les Varna, deux Ottawa, mais ce n'est que le deuxième Festival d'Hiroshima auquel je participe.

**Certains festivals sont devenus tellement grands qu'ils ont beaucoup perdu de leur côté sympathique, amical, ils sont devenus un peu impersonnels.**

**Moins:** Vous vous souvenez du premier festival auquel vous avez assisté?

**Servais:** C'était le premier Festival d'Annecy, le seul à ce moment-là. Je m'en souviens très bien car j'avais été un peu déçu. J'avais proposé un film et j'ai appris au dernier moment, sur place qu'il n'avait finalement pas été sélectionné. Quelques mois plus tard, mon film (*Chromophobia*) obtenait le Lion de St. Marc à Venise...

**Moins:** Depuis que vous fréquentez les festivals, quels changements

avez-vous perçus?

**Servais:** Surtout une évolution quantitative. Beaucoup plus de festivals, et dans chaque festival de plus en plus de films, en compétition, en rétrospective, etc ... C'est assez curieux dans la mesure où la situation du court métrage ne fait que se dégrader. Sans doute est-ce dû à cet autre phénomène majeur: la multiplication des écoles de cinéma d'animation. Le pourcentage de films d'étudiants dans les festivals d'animation est très élevé.

Je regrette un peu cette croissance des festivals. Certains sont devenus tellement grands qu'ils ont beaucoup perdu de leur côté sympathique, amical, ils sont devenus un peu impersonnels.

**Moins:** Quelle impression vous a fait Hiroshima?

**Servais:** Jusqu'à présent, je ne peux parler que du tout premier, qui m'a très agréablement surpris: organisation parfaite, beaucoup de monde, programmes très bien faits, pour une première édition c'était une réussite complète.

**Moins:** Vous avez côtoyé les "grands" qui sont passés dans l'histoire du cinéma d'animation: Mc Laren, Grimault, etc. ... Lequel vous a laissé la plus forte impression?

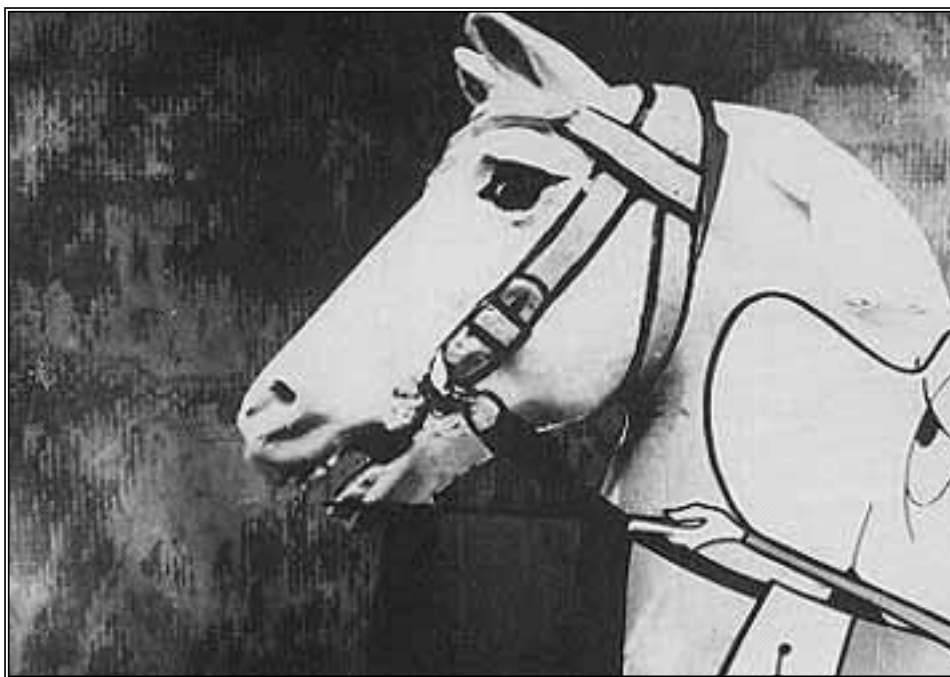
**Servais:** C'est très difficile à dire. Ils sont nombreux à m'avoir laissé une forte impression. Mc Laren a écrit quelque chose de très gentil à propos d'un de mes films. J'avais un contact très amical avec lui, bien que je ne l'aie vu en tout que trois ou quatre fois.

Je peux dire de Paul Grimault qu'il était mon ami. Je me souviens des quinze jours que nous avons passés ensemble, au Japon précisément, alors qu'il était Président d'honneur à Hiroshima.

Karel Zeman m'a fort touché. J'ai fort sympathisé avec lui à Téhéran. Nous avons découvert que nous travaillions avec la même caméra. On s'est passé des tuyaux. Il aimait beaucoup ce que je faisais et c'était réciproque. Nous avions cette même approche du film d'animation, aller au-delà du dessin animé



*Harpya (1979)*



**La Fausse Note** (1963)

et essayer d'introduire la prise de vues réelles dans le cinéma d'animation, ce qu'il a brillamment réussi dans *l'Invention diabolique*.

Bretislav Pojar est un ami très intime. Il vient chez moi, je vais chez lui, c'est un homme adorable.

On pourrait également citer Frédéric Back pour lequel j'ai une profonde admiration. Nous correspondons régulièrement. C'est quelqu'un d'un grande modestie alors qu'il a un très grand talent. Plus récemment, j'ai eu un très bon contact avec John Lasseter. Et puis Ivan Ivanov Vano, Fédor Khitruk, on s'est vus très souvent, mais je ne vais pas tous les citer ....

**Moins:** Quel enseignement retirez-vous des neuf ans passés à la tête de l'ASIFA?

**Servais:** La présidence de l'ASIFA est une très lourde charge. Le hasard a voulu que cela coïncide pour moi avec le long métrage. Je n'étais pas entièrement disponible pour m'occuper de l'ASIFA. J'ai heureusement été secondé par Nicole Salomon qui était une excellente secrétaire générale. J'ai pu me

rendre compte de la force de l'ASIFA dans ses contacts et ses relations internationales, mais aussi de sa grande faiblesse: son manque de financement.

**Moins:** Aujourd'hui, vous renouez avec le court métrage?

**Servais:** Je me suis effectivement lancé dans un nouveau projet, intitulé *Papillons de nuit*. Il s'agit d'un film réalisé en "Servaisgraphie", le procédé d'incrustation que j'avais mis au point pour *Taxandria*. C'est un hommage au peintre surréaliste belge Paul Delvaux. Si tout se passe comme prévu, le film sera terminé dans le courant de l'année prochaine. Ensuite, j'ai d'autres projets dans mes cartons...

**Ce phénomène a disparu totalement et cela a beaucoup contribué à la marginalisation du court métrage.**

**Moins:** Qu'avez-vous envie de dire aux jeunes professionnels qui rêvent de faire du court métrage d'animation d'auteur?

**Servais:** S'ils aiment cela, ils doivent le faire, mais ne pas sousestimer les grands problèmes qu'ils vont rencontrer. S'ils le font en pensant qu'ils vont gagner de l'argent, il vaut mieux qu'ils y renoncent tout de suite.

**Moins:** Est-ce plus facile aujourd'hui qu'à l'époque où vous avez commencé, à la fin des années cinquante?

**Servais:** Oui et non. Oui parce qu'aujourd'hui il existe des écoles, de la littérature technique, la possibilité réelle de faire des stages dans les studios; A l'époque où j'ai commencé, il n'y avait pas d'écoles. On peut dire qu'en Europe il y avait interdiction formelle de pénétrer dans les studios, ce qui s'y passait était pratiquement "top secret". On apprenait tout par soi-même. J'ai eu un retard de dix ou quinze ans par rapport à d'autres. A l'Académie de Gand où j'ai enseigné, mes élèves apprenaient en trois mois ce que j'avais mis dix ans à acquérir. Par contre, à l'époque où j'ai débuté, quand un auteur parvenait à faire un court métrage, il y avait beaucoup de chance qu'il passe dans les salles de cinéma. Le complément de programme était une habitude. Ce phénomène a disparu totalement et cela a beaucoup contribué à la marginalisation du court métrage.

**Moins:** Quels sont vos "coups de coeur", dans la production actuelle?

**Servais:** Frédéric Back et son dernier film, *Le Fleuve aux grandes eaux* m'emballent définitivement. C'est un documentaire, mais il y a une telle maîtrise du dessin, cela me stupéfie quand je vois que cet homme a fait tout cela au crayon





*Chromophobia* (1966)

sur des feuilles de cellophane. L'ordinateur ne pourra jamais égaler cet homme. N'ayons pas peur des mots, Frédéric Back est un génie.

**Moins:** Et ce que vous détestez?

**Servais:** (sourir) J'ai toujours détesté les imitations de Disney. Hélas on en a fait beaucoup. Je déteste aussi les films par ordinateur lorsqu'ils sont réalisés par de très bons techniciens qui n'ont aucune sensibilité artistique. Heureusement, nous avons un peu dépassé ce cap.

**Moins:** Quel est le futur du cinéma d'animation?

**Servais:** Je ne suis pas prophète. Je pense qu'inévitablement l'ordinateur va jouer un rôle, positif car il permet de réaliser des choses qui en principe n'étaient pas réalisables jusqu'à présent. On va pouvoir éviter cette absence de personnalité propre aux images de synthèse. De plus en plus de créateurs vont y participer.

Mais c'est malheureusement au détriment de la main d'oeuvre.

Beaucoup de gens vont perdre leur emploi, dans les domaines d'exécution comme le traçage, le coloriage, l'intervallisme...

Au niveau social, je trouve que c'est une évolution un peu triste.

## Filmographie de Raoul Servais

### En vues réelles

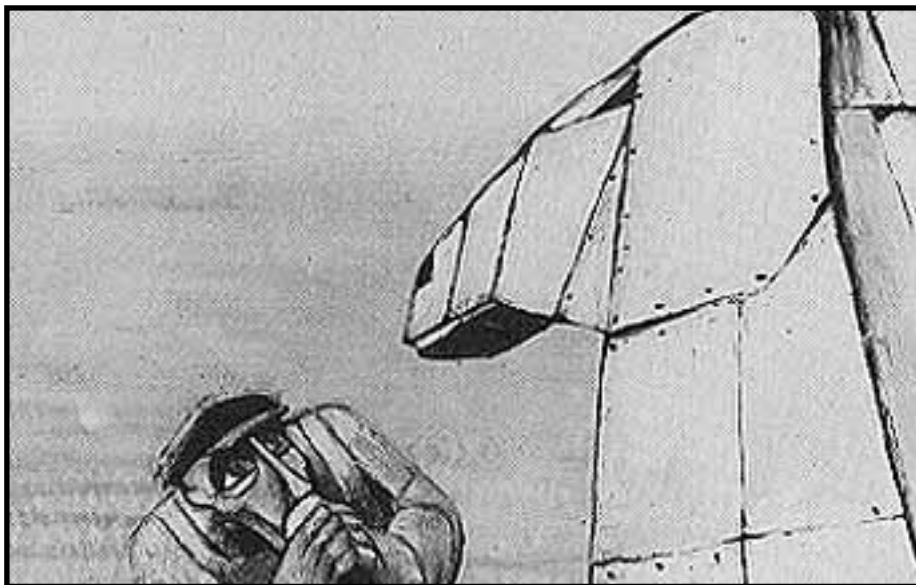
- *Omleiding November* (Déviation novembre), 1962

### En animation

- *Havenlichten* (Lumières du port), 1960
- *De Valse noot* (la fausse note), 1963
- *Chromophobia*, 1966
- *Sirene*, 1968
- *Goldframe*, 1969
- *To Speak or Not to Speak*, 1970
- *Operation X-70*, 1971
- *Pegasus*, 1973
- *Halewyn*, 1976

### En trucage

- *Harpya*, 1979
- *Taxandria*, 1994



*Pegasus* (1973)

Philippe Moins est le fondateur du Festival du Dessin Animé de Bruxelles. Ecrivain spécialisé dans l'animation, il était l'Editeur en Chef de l'ASIFA News (publié par l'ASIFA International) et il actuellement rédacteur en chef de La Gazette du Loup, une publication trimestrielle sur l'animation.

# FESTIVAL REVIEW

## Singapore Animation Fiesta

by Mark Langer

An island located a 100 miles north of the equator may seem like an unlikely place to hold an animation festival, but when I received an invitation to attend the Animation Fiesta in Singapore on June 15-16, I jumped at the chance. It had snowed in my hometown of Ottawa, Canada as late as May and a tropical escape seemed ideal. My ideas about Singapore were derived from novels set in Britain's colonial Far East by people like Somerset Maugham and Rudyard Kipling. Edward Said would undoubtedly disapprove, but I fantasized shooting tigers from my seat in Raffles' Long Bar, or consuming Singapore Slings in a seedy tavern with Burmese-based White Russian traders and Imperial Japanese agents working out an opium-for-arms deal behind beaded curtains. Next to us, a malarial British Vice-Consul in a rumpled white linen suit would be drinking himself to death while upstairs his wife would be committing adultery under mosquito netting with someone wearing a fez. Rain would fall endlessly on Chinese junks docking at the wharf outside. What surprises must lie in store for the traveller to the perfumed port city of Sing-a-pore, I thought.

After 36 hours of travel (including an unscheduled stop in Hong Kong due to a missed connection), jet-lag-

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**I fantasized shooting tigers from my seat in Raffles' Long Bar, or consuming Singapore Slings in a seedy tavern with Burmese-based White Russian traders.**

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ged but happy, I sat at Raffles' Long Bar amid dozens of other naive tourists. The biggest surprise was the \$18.50 cost of a Singapore Sling. It has been a few years since someone shot a tiger in the Long Bar and the mosquito netting was taken down long ago. Singapore is a cosmopolitan city of 3 million where restaurants hawking "Clay Pot Live Frog" or "Pigs Organ Soup" stand cheek by jowl with McDonald's and Arby's fast food outlets. Traditional Peranakan architec-

ture is vanishing beneath modern high rises. Standing on the corner of Ganges Road and Zion Street (near the confluence of Synagogue and Church Streets), listening to passersby speaking in Mandarin, Teochew, Malay, Hakka, Hainanese, Hokkien, Cantonese, Tamil, English and the local variant, Singlish, the vibrant multicultural atmosphere of the city impressed me. As one of the economic powerhouses of Asia and a crossroads of the world, with a small but growing animation scene, Singapore is an ideal location for an international animation festival.

### A Fringe Event

The Animation Fiesta was a fringe event of the biennial Singapore Arts Festival. The impetus for this first animation festival in Singapore came from Dr. N. Varaprasad, Principal and CEO of Temasek Polytechnic. On learning that Temasek cultural studies lecturer Gigi Hu was planning to attend the 1994 Cardiff International Animation Festival, Varaprasad suggested that one be started locally. The event was organized by Hu and animation instructor Lilian Soon, supported by Temasek, the National Arts Council of Singapore and a variety of embassies, high commissions and private corporations. The chal-



In a Hainan steamboat restaurant between screenings;  
Front row, left to right: Sayoko Kinoshita, Lilian Soon;  
Back row, left to right: Roger Noake, Pansy Cham  
(National Council of Singapore), Gigi Hu

Courtesy of Mark Langer



lenge of coordinating such an event, and of educating the local public about the nature of animation was formidable, but was well met by the organizers. The result was a lively two day long event held in a charmingly restored Victorian-era theater within the Raffles Hotel complex. Guests of the festival were lodged at the nearby Peninsula Hotel in the colonial heart of the city near such architectural gems as Raffles, St. Andrew's Church, and the National Museum and Art Gallery, and close to picturesque areas of the city like Little India, Chinatown and Arab Street.

Mornings and afternoon sessions featured guest speakers, while the evenings were given over to screenings. The opening presentation by West Surrey College of Art and Design's Roger Noake examined the interrelationship of art, technology and communication by presenting personal projects and sponsored work of animators from Len Lye and Oscar Fischinger to the present day. The tradition of public service or commercial work sponsoring more experimental animation continues in films by people like the Brothers Quay, Marjut Rimmenen and David Anderson in England, according to Roger.

This was followed by Albert Schafer, a manager at Studio-TV-Film in Berlin, who showed examples of television series and documentaries using animation to educate children in Europe about environmental issues. Focusing on works like *The Bamboo Bears* or *Albert Says Nature Knows Best*, Schafer surveyed



Master of Ceremonies, Helen Ho with Lilian Soon backstage.  
Courtesy of Mark Langer

German animations "green scene."

Animator Dani Montano from Dimensions in Manila presented an eclectic survey of animation from the Philippines, Indonesia, India and China, ranging from public service films on the virtues of birth control and dangers of AIDS to children's parables. The tension between expressing local cultures, and the financial lure of filmmaking for international markets was graphically illustrated by the broad variety of films shown.

### Local Production

Local production was presented through an exhibition of work from Animata Productions, Garman Animation Studios and Temasek Polytechnic. The student films were imaginative, demonstrating that the limited resources of a newly-established animation program at Temasek are not barriers to creativity. K. Subramaniam of Animata spoke about how he and his associates have tried to

develop their skills by increasingly ambitious projects. Subra showed his short animated study of an old man's loneliness, *The Cage*, which won the Special Jury Award in the Singapore Short Film Competition, and an excerpt from Singapore's first animated feature-length film *Life of Buddha*, which has become a strong seller in Asian video markets. The session closed with an enjoyably quirky lecture by Garman Herigstad, who discussed his experiences animating in Asian countries, displayed a showreel of his computer animation,

and ended with an exhibition of his guitar collection!

Saturday evening consisted of programs devoted to Japan and Canada. The Japanese program presented Isao Takahata's classic *Tombstone for Fireflies* (*Grave of the Fireflies*), a tale of the fate of teenaged Seita and his four-year-old sister Setsuko in the last months of World War II in Kobe, Japan, and one of the few films that invariably cause me to weep. The Canadian program featured recent National Film Board productions, including Cordell Barker's *The Cat Came Back*, Paul Driessen's *The End of the World in Four Seasons* and Caroline Leaf's *Two Sisters*. Singapore has fairly rigid censorship standards. While the films shown in the Fiesta received an educational exemption, movies depicting nudity were pushing the envelope as far as local norms go. This became apparent during the screening of Snowden and Fines *Bob's Birthday*. When the morose Bob appeared naked from

the waist down, the audience first gasped and then came out with the longest sustained laughter (continuing through Bob's "Elephant Dance") that I have ever heard.

The final day began with a survey of Japanese animation by Sayoko Kinoshita, director of the International Animation Festival in Hiroshima. Sayoko presented a demo reel of the 5th Hiroshima Festival along with some of her and her husband Renzo Kinoshita's own work, including *Made in Japan*, and the more recent *Hiroshima*, which deals with the nuclear bombing. Speaking in Singapore, a country that suffered terribly under Japanese occupation, Sayoko reflected on Japan's responsibility for the war in a moving moment for the speaker and the audience.

Martin McNamara, producer for Colossal Pictures, Saga City Media, Nickelodeon and other companies, discussed the use of computer animation techniques by Bay Area animation studios in a talk called "Behind the Scenes." Through the presentation of element footage, Marty documented the stages of production of advertisements, music videos, title sequences, etc., which employ art media ranging from traditional cel and miniatures to computer-generated imagery. This fascinating survey unfortunately was cut short by lack of time.

**When the he appeared naked from the waist down, the audience first gasped and then came out with the longest sustained laughter that I have ever heard.**



Lobby outside Jubilee Theater, left to right: Roger Noake and Poppy Palele of Red Rocket Indonesia  
Courtesy of Mark Langer

### Red Rocket, Animata, etc.

A segment on Animation and Advertising featuring examples of work by Southeast Asian producers and agencies, such as Inside Design, IDimaging, Garman Animation Studios, Red Rocket Indonesia, Animata, O & M, VHQ, Dentsu, Young Rubicam, and Cowboy Water Design was presented by Brian Harrison, Managing Director of Dentsu, Young and Rubicam, Jonathan Ang, an animator at VHQ Singapore, and James Speck, owner of Cowboy Water Design. Then came my turn at bat. In a discussion of Animation and Satire, I had to grapple with the prob-

lem of making the Canadian obsession with hockey, as seen in Sheldon Cohen's *The Sweater*, intelligible to an audience from the tropics. Films by Norman McLaren (*Neighbours* and *A Chairy Tale*) and John Weldon (*Special Delivery*, *Real Inside* and *The Lump*) seemed somewhat more easily appreciated by those attending.

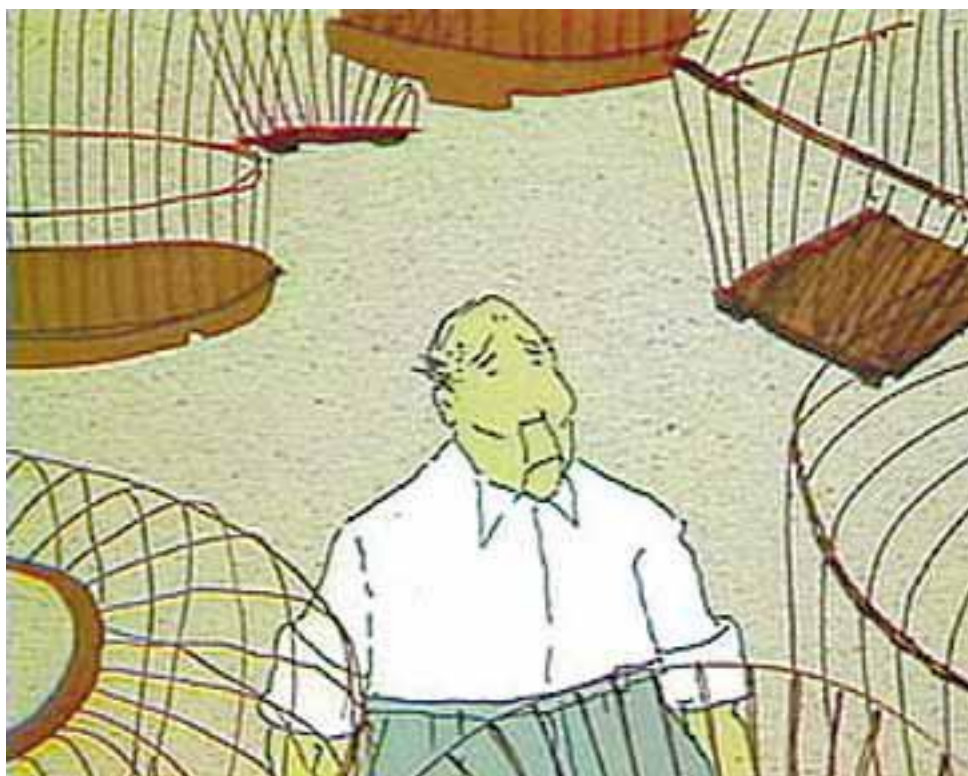
The Fiesta ended with a sneak Singapore preview of *James and the Giant Peach*, followed by an MTV showreel featuring various MTV logos, *Aeon Flux*, *Stick Figure Theater*, and the inevitable *Beavis and Butt-Head*, whose charms were relatively new to a Singapore audience. This was followed by final retreat of invited guests to the Long Bar for a final goodbye get-together.

The atmosphere at the Animation Fiesta was relaxed and casual with uncommonly good attention being paid to invited guests. Being a noncompetitive and relatively unknown festival, the aisles of the theater weren't haunted by exhausted jurors, overstressed com-



Public service announcement by Red Rocket Indonesia  
Courtesy of the Singapore Animation Fiesta





**The Cage, Animata**

Courtesy of the Singapore Animation Fiesta

petitors, or recruitment agents from major studios and their prey. The scale of the event was intimate enough for everyone to get to

know one another. Sessions were interspersed with frequent breaks in Raffles' Empire Room for schmoozing by guests and locals

over tea accompanied by cucumber sandwiches and incendiary curries. Late nights were spent roistering over Tiger beer, steamboats and nasi padang. Expeditions to local open-air markets resulted in memorable sights and experiences, among which was my first (and final) taste of durian—a local fruit that looks like an armored coconut from the planet Klingon, with a subtle flavor but an overpowering odor reminiscent of decaying road kill. As a fringe benefit of Singapore's location near Malaysia and Indonesia, several guests of the festival took trips to Bali, or, as I did, to Malacca. It was with a real sense of regret that I packed my bags for home. The Animation Fiesta promises to be the first of a series of biennial events. I'm starting to save my pennies for travel to the next one.



**A Man's Tale by Ivan Chua (Temasek Polytechnic)**

Courtesy of the Singapore Animation Fiesta

Mark Langer teaches film at Carleton University in Ottawa Canada. He is a frequent contributor to scholarly journals and a programmer of animation retrospectives.

## Mango, I Mean Manga Mania!

compiled by Frankie Kowalski

OK, so anime is a cultural phenomenon in Japan and fast becoming the same around the world. Got a chance to speak with Akira Murayama (Executive Producer, Manga & Movie Original Story Competition), Frederik L. Schodt (author of *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*), Toren Smith (whose company, Proteus, is an anime comic book distributor) and Greg Barr (anime writer and long-time fan).

### Akira Murayama's desert island picks:

1. *East of Eden* by Elia Kazan
2. *L'Estate violent* by Varello Zurlini
3. *Nogiku no gotoki, kimi nariki* by Keisuke Kinoshita
4. *Empire of Passion* by Nagisa Oshima
5. *Harry Weinberg's Notebook* by Yariv Kohn
6. *La Strada* by Fredrico Fellini
7. *Plein Soleil (Purple Noon)* by René Clement
8. *Les dimanches de Ville d'Avray (Sundays and Cybelle)* by Serge Bourguignon
9. *The Kid* by Charles Chaplin
10. *La leçon particuliere* by Michele Bowaron



**Ghost in the Shell** by Mamoru Oshii  
© Manga Entertainment

### Frederik L. Schodt's picks ...

"I never thought that Japanese animation would become as popular in the United States as it has. Today, with fan clubs on nearly all major university campuses, hundreds of fan-built Web sites, and regular conventions annually, ani-me is on the verge of going mainstream. I don't pretend to know all the reasons for this phenomenon, but I suspect it's more than just the intrinsic quality of the anime itself. Certainly, American and European commercial animation had become too formulaic and limited in expression. But also, I like to think that we are finally seeing the appearance of a global mind-meld, where young people in both Asia and the West increasingly share similar outlooks and values, allowing otherwise quite "different" Japanese animation to take root here."

1. *Jumping* by Osamu Tezuka
2. *Nausicaa* (The uncut, Japanese version) by Hayao Miyazaki
3. *Wings of Desire* by Wim Wender
4. *Alice in Wonderland* by Walt Disney
5. *Little Big Man* by Arthur Penn
6. *Ghost in the Shell* by Mamoru Oshii & Masamune Shirow
7. *Yojimbo* by Akira Kurosawa
8. *Rashomon* by Akira Kurosawa
9. *Throne of Blood* by Akira Kurosawa
10. *Solaris* by Andrei Tarkovsky



## Toren Smith's picks ...

"It's been great watching anime enter the mainstream over the last 15 years. When I first saw Matthew Sweets' *Girlfriend* video on MTV, using clips from the great anime movie *Space Adventure Cobra*, I knew things had forever changed for Japanese animation. Now we have huge anime sections in video stores, anime showing on the Sci-Fi Channel, and packed theaters nationwide for *Ghost in the Shell* (not to mention two thumbs up from Siskel and Ebert). What's next? Personally, I wouldn't be surprised to see an all-anime channel within a year or two. Note my flagrant *Ren & Stimpy* cheat."

1. *The Angel's Egg*, by Mamoru Oshii
2. *Crusher Joe*, by Yoshikazu Yasuhiko
3. *For All Mankind*, by Al Reinert and NASA
4. *Ghost in the Shell*, by Mamoru Oshii
5. *Lupin III: Cagliostro Castle*, by Hayao Miyazaki
6. *Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind*, by Hayao Miyazaki
7. All *Ren & Stimpy* episodes by John K.
8. *Terminator 2*, by James Cameron
9. *Urusei Yatsura: Beautiful Dreamer*, by Mamoru Oshii
10. *The Wings of Honneamise*, by Hiroyuki Yamaga

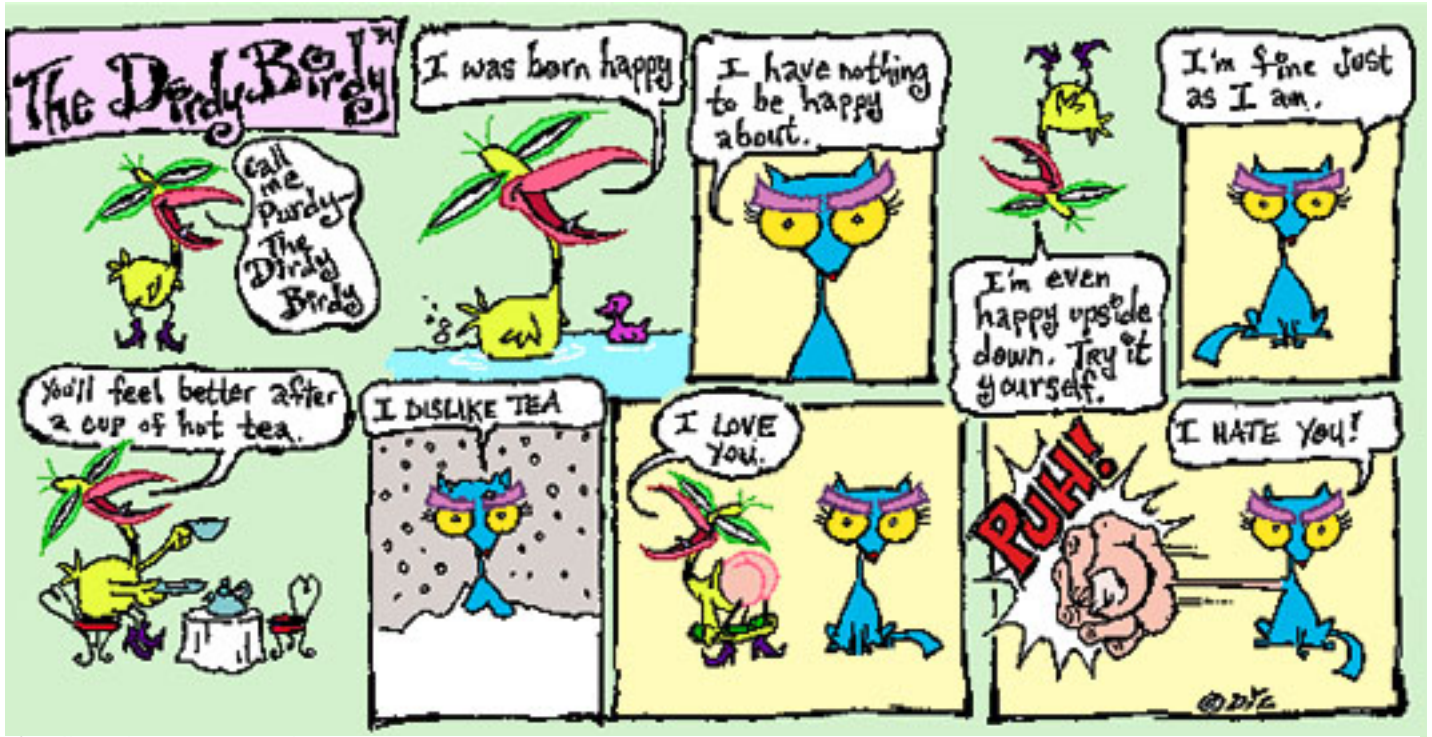


Orguss 02  
© Manga Entertainment

## Greg Barr's picks ...

1. *Wings of Honneamise* (aka *Royal Space Force*) by Hiroyuki Yamaga
2. *2001: A Space Odyssey* by Stanley Kubrick
3. *The Nightmare Before Christmas* by Tim Burton
4. *Star Wars* by George Lucas
5. *The Empire Strikes Back* by George Lucas
6. *Return of the Jedi* By George Lucas,
7. *Fantasia* by Walt Disney
8. *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* by Hayao Miyazaki
9. *Angel's Egg* by Mamoru Oshii
10. *Bedazzled* by Stanley Donen

# AWM Comics



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by John R. Dilworth.  
Color by Risa McInnes

I am very proud to present the first of a series of monthly comics to appear in *Animation World Magazine* featuring the international stars, Purdy, The Dirty Birdy and Furgerina, from the heart-warming short animated film, *The Dirty Birdy*. Soon *The Dirty Birdy* will have his very own web site accessible through Animation World Network and everyone will be able to enter the strange and dysfunctional world of Purdy, The Dirty Birdy. If you choose, write to The Dirty Birdy at [dil63@aol.com](mailto:dil63@aol.com).

Sincerely John R. Dilworth





# NEWS

## Time Warner-Turner Merger Approved and Fox to Take Over New World.

The recent merger/takeover mania in the American entertainment industry continues apace as the Federal Trade Commission finally gave its approval of the merger of Time Warner and Turner. The combination, besides creating the world's largest entertainment company, will also include a host of animation units that include Warner Bros. Feature Animation, Turner Feature Animation, Warner Bros. TV Animation, Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, Warner Bros. Classic Animation, Film Cartoons and the Cartoon Network. In addition, there is Warner's distribution deal with Chuck Jones and Turner Feature Animation's development deal with Colossal Pictures. The merger also makes the Warner Bros. animation library whole, as the rights to the pre-1948 cartoon are held by Turner.

At the same time as the FTC made its announcement, News Corp., which owns Fox, announced a \$2.5 billion takeover of New World Entertainment, whose assets include New World Animation and Marvel Films Animation. The deal gives Fox an in-house television animation capability (it already has a feature animation unit); Fox is the most successful terrestrial broadcaster of animation, with its Fox Children's Network and *The Simpsons* in prime time. (Although Fox has an interest in *The Simpsons*, its actual production is handled by Film Roman.)



## Disney Will Distribute Japanese Animation.

Walt Disney Studios and Japan's Tokuma Shoten Publishing Co. have formed an alliance for the international distribution of animated product from Tokuma's Studio Ghibli. The catalog will include eight animated features by Hayao Miyazaki, whose films include *Kiki's Delivery Service* and *My Neighbor Totoro* (which had considerable success in the US in its video release), as well as rights to distribute his next film, *Princess Mononoke*. One of Japan's most famous directors, Miyazaki's films regularly outdraw such Disney films as *Aladdin* and *The Lion King* at the box office. Disney organization has long admired his work, but Miyazaki had previously shunned the studios offers and said that recent Disney films lacked "decency." He has also been approached by Fox and Warner Bros., but in the past has shunned efforts to promote his films abroad, as he was wary of changes that might be made by foreign distributors. At a news conference in Tokyo, Miyazaki said he agreed to

the deal to help Tokuma, which had backed him from his early days.

## Prime Time Emmy Nominations Announced.

The nominees for best "Animated Program (for Programming One Hour or Less)" were: *Cow and Chicken in No Smoking* (Pilar Feiss, director, for Hanna-Barbera/Cartoon Network), *Dexter's Laboratory* (the series) (Gennedy Tartovsky, executive producer, and Craig McCracken and Paul Rudish directors, for Hanna-Barbera/Cartoon Network), *Duckman* (Klasky Csupo/USA Network), *A Pinky & the Brain Christmas Special* (Rusty Mills for Warner Bros. TV Animation/Amblin) and *The Simpsons* (Bob Anderson, director, for Film Roman/Gracie Films). The nominees for "Individual Achievement in Graphic Design and Title Sequences" are: *Caroline in the City* (NBC), *Central Park West* (CBS) and *Discovery Journal* (Discovery Channel). In addition, *Peter and the Wolf*, an animated special made for ABC which utilized character designs by Chuck Jones, was nominated in the category of "Children's Program (Area Award)."

Also, a bit belatedly, we would like to report that *Lynn Smith: Method*, one of six episodes in the documentary series, *Animated Women* won a regional Emmy for San Francisco/Northern California area, in the category of "Cultural Affairs: Single Program from a Series." The series was directed by animation historian Sybil Del Gaudio.

## First Asia Computer Animation Festival (ACAF) to Debut in November.

The festival, to be staged at the Funan Centre, in Singapore, will be held from November 22 to December 8, 1996. The sponsors anticipate some 600,000 people will attend the 17-day event. The objectives of the festivals include: Providing a forum to display state-of-the-art technology; help build a computer animation industry in Asia; and increase Asia's animation standards through competition. For more information about the festival, which hopes to be an annual event, contact Raymond Neoh, the events organizer, at [krystal@pacific.net.sg](mailto:krystal@pacific.net.sg).

## CST Entertainment To Buy Toon Unit.

CST has signed a letter of intent to acquire the production services division of Hollywood's USAnimation which does digital ink-and-paint work (*The Simpsons*, *Ren and Stimpy*, *The New Adventures of Jonny Quest*) and has developed software tools for various types of animation work. CST does colorization, color correction for a number of studio and production clients.

## Saban Signs Deal With Germany's ARD TV Network.

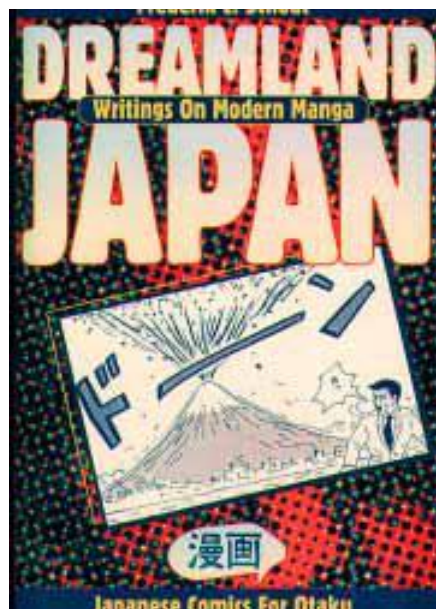
A three year, \$50 million co-production and library program licensing agreement has been signed. ARD will co-produce 6 children's series amounting to 182 half-hours with Saban Entertainment, of which two shows are new—*Jim Button* and *Night of the Wishes*—from renowned German author Michael Ende. In addition, ARD will acquire 390 half-hour episodes of existing children's TV programs and 30 telefilms.

## Betty Boop: The Definitive Collection Arrives In Stores This Fall.

Produced by animation historian Jerry Beck and distributed by Republic Pictures, this 8 volume set features a collector's edition library case with a special introduction from Richard Fleischer, the son of animation pioneer Max Fleischer. Betty, who has delighted audiences for over 65 years, has enjoyed many adventures included in this special collection of 115 original cartoon shorts.

## Overview Of Manga Sheds New Light On Japanese Culture.

Acknowledged Western expert, Frederick Schodt, explains just how pervasive Japanese comics are in Japan and how influential they are in his new book, *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*. In this tome about this Japanese obsession, Schodt ponders the future of manga drawn with computer and discusses the influence of manga on US comics. Available in stores now for \$16.95. from Stone Bridge Press.



Cover of *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*  
© Stone Bridge Press

## ANIMHA 96 Celebrated Throughout The Year In The UK.

ANIMHA 96 is a community-based animation film project taking place in the Northern Arts Region as part of the centennial celebrations of the birth of the movies. Its aim is to celebrate this by uniting people through animation. It plans to link the region through a series of film production workshops, in which many communities are involved in animation process. Two key films are in production: *The Lambton Worm*, a modern interpretation of a traditional North East folktale, and *Tales from the Pit*, produced in Seaham, Co. Durham, in the heart of the famous East Durham Coal field, in which retired miners have created a new world of colliery characters. For further information, contact Mike Booth, at [mike@mjbbooth.demon.co.uk](mailto:mike@mjbbooth.demon.co.uk).

## AnimAction Announces Second Annual Animation 500.

On November 2, 1996, in Los Angeles, California, AnimAction will host this fundraising event for BRIDGES, their animation and interactive multimedia training program dedicated to helping artists realize their dreams in a career in animation. Animation 500 is an animation "production race" in which teams work together with interns for up to 9 nine hours to produce 20 seconds of an animated short. By days end, the teams animation is projected at a Gala Screening. For more information call (310) 260-4891.

## The following items are from AWM's July 7, 1996 Email News Flash:



## **Marvel Super Heroics To Continue On Fox Kids Network.**

In the deal, Fox is believed to have secured the rights to major Marvel comic book characters including Caption America, Daredevil and Silver Surfer, who is already slated to have a series on the Fox Children's Network in September 1997. Fox, who currently airs *X-Men* by Saban Entertainment and *Spider-Man* from Marvel Entertainment Group, has guaranteed Marvel it will produce a minimum of 52 episodes of programs based on at least four Marvel properties during the 7-year term of the deal.

## **Cartoon Network Will Have "Cow" With H-B Premiere.**

*Cow and Chicken*, the Cartoon Networks second animated series will premiere on the next year. Thirteen half-hour programs have been ordered of the show, which follows the antics of a surreal pair of siblings of different species; the first half hour, "I Am Weasel," will be animated by David Fiess. The series follows the first "World Premiere Toons" show, *Dexter's Laboratory*, which was launched in April. The network will also introduce the new *Real Adventures of Johnny Quest* this August.

## **Hearst Establishes Entertainment Licensing Unit.**

William Jemas, Jr. to head this new unite that will concentrate on merchandising and consumer product licensing related to Hearst's television programming and feature films. Among the Entertainment Licensing unit initial activities will be the merchandising and licensing of Paramount's recently-released *The Phantom* and the upcoming *Prince*

*Valiant*, as well as for the animated TV series *Flash Gordon*, which makes its debut this fall in national syndication.

## **Turner, Subway Tango On Cat's Don't Dance.**

Turner Home Entertainment has locked up a licensing deal with Subway Sandwiches and Salads for Turners first animated feature *Cats Don't Dance*, produced by David Kirshner and Paul Gertz. Subway will be launching a 4 to 6 week kids meal program to coincide with the films debut in March 1997. The promotion will appear in up to 12,000 restaurants worldwide with a yet-to-be-determined premium offer.

## **Sarandon, Class6 Interactive Ink For CD-ROM.**

Academy Award winner Susan Sarandon, will be involved with TechToons Ltd. to narrate the upcoming CD-ROM release, *Cosmo's Rocket*. The disc, slated for fall release, tells an original story of a boy, his dog and his inventions. Class6 Interactive has also signed an exclusive production deal with former *Ren and Stimpy* animators, Ted and John Mathot. The pair is wrapping up work on an upcoming Class6 game, *Creature Crunch*, due out next month.

## **Interactive CD-ROM Teaches How To Draw Cartoons.**

Diamar Interactives new CD-ROM, *How to Draw Cartoons*, is based on the book *Everything You Ever Wanted To Know about Cartooning But Were Afraid To Draw*, by cartoonist Christopher Hart. Aimed at teenagers and adults who always wanted to draw, it is designed to teach users the techniques of perspective, character development,

scene design, and color. The lessons include more than 800 illustrations and Hart cartoons. Christopher Hart has worked on the *Blondie* comic strip and is a regular contributor to *Mad Magazine*. For more information in the US, call 1-800-234-2627.

## **The following items are from AWM's July 21, 1996 Email News Flash:**

### **Welter New President In Saban's Overhaul.**

Michael Welter has been named president of Saban Enterprises International, a new division of Saban formed to manage the company's international licensing, merchandising and promotional activities. Also, as part of the restructuring, Oliver Spiner, senior vice president of Saban International, will now handle Welter's previous operational duties out of the Saban Paris office. In addition, Eric Rollman, previously senior vice president production, has been named executive vice president of Saban Animation.

### **Cinar Production Help Increase Profits.**

Cinar reported profit of C\$3.3 million for the six months ending May 31, 1996, up from C\$2.3 million a year earlier. Production has brought Cinar's library to 750 half-hours by year end. The new series include *City Mouse*, *Country Mouse* and *Ivanhoe* (co-produced with France Animation for broadcast on the state-run France 2 and TVOntario, the Ontario government's educational channel).

### **Fine-Tooning Global Animation Festival.**

The Animation Celebration, scheduled for March 23-30, 1997 in Pasadena, California,

will serve as an umbrella event for two existing events: The Los Angeles International Animation Competition (LAIAC) and ASIFA Hollywood's Animation Opportunities Expo, as well as a new Animation Technology Trade Show and a slate of seminars, exhibitions and symposiums.

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**The Real Adventures Of Jonny Quest Premieres In August On Cartoon Network.** Based on the 1960s prime time series, the new Hanna-Barbera animated series, purportedly updated to the 1990s, will air in a Monday-Friday strip on all three Turner Networks—the Cartoon Network, TNT and TBS.

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**Tracer And Holy Grail Games Ships.** The latest CD-ROM title published by 7th Level and developed by Future Endeavors of Canada, is now shipping in the US for Window 95 at the suggested retail price of \$29.99. Players can choose from four "lifelike characters" to escape the Tracer virus that's in hot pursuit. You must strategically place stepping stones of like colors to create a path to the computer's inner sanctum—the data core. You can go it alone or have up to eight players. *Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail*, based on the classic movie, is also shipping and is available in stores now.

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**Sierra On-Line New Strategic War Game Now Available.** *MissionForce: Cyberstorm*, is a new simulation game which is said to be constantly creating new battlefields, terrain and missions every time the game is played, is now available for Windows 95 on 2 CD-ROMs for \$59.95.

*The following announcements were made at the recent VSDA (Video Software Dealers Association) in Los Angeles, California:*

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**Aladdin And The King Of Thieves Releases Direct To Video.** Robin Williams once again brings life to "the big blue guy", will be available on August 13, and is the final chapter of the Walt Disney Video trilogy that began with the 1992 box office hit *Aladdin*. In this movie, Aladdin and Jasmine are finally married, but before they take their vows, he embarks on a quest to find his long-lost father. Running time is 82 minutes and it is priced at \$24.99.

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**Paramount Launches Nickelodeon Partnership With New Rugrats.** Two new-to-video titles, *Rugrats Phil and Lil Double Trouble* and *Rugrats Tommy Troubles* each contain four cartoons; each video retails for \$12.95 and are due on stores this October.

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**MGM/UA Acquires Rights To Pee-Wee's Playhouse.** The first installment of *Pee-Wee's Playhouse* volume sets will be released fourth quarter this year. This Emmy award winning show includes such animated shorts as "Penny" by Craig Barlett. MGM/UA will also release *Pee-Wee's Playhouse Christmas Special*, in addition to four volumes of *Pee-Wee's Playhouse* episodes. Some show titles are "Open House," "Pee-wee Catches A Cold" and "To Tell The Tooth."

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**Sony Music Video And MTV Release Beavis And Butt-Head Do Christmas.** Featuring America's favorite morons in their own twisted versions of two holi-

day classics along with viewer letters to Santa Butt-Head. In "Huh-Huh Humbug" a Scrooge-like Beavis is visited by the ghost of Christmas past, present, and future. In "It's a Miserable Lie," Charlie the Angel is sent down from heaven to show Butt-Head how much better life would be without him. *Beavis and Butt-Head Do Christmas* arrives in stores this October.

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**Brøderbund Software Announces Next Generation Of Carmen Sandiego.** *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* and *Where in the USA is Carmen Sandiego?*, will feature 360 degree panoramas from over 50 countries and 50 states as walking tours and extensive electronic databases that include videos, photographs and short essays from National Geographic as well as flags and geopolitical maps. This next generation will ship this Fall for approximately \$45 - \$50.

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**Mr. Bill's Christmas Special Releases On Video For Holiday Season.** Anchor Bay Entertainment and Sluggo Broadcasting System offers this clay animated holiday special, written, directed, and produced by Mr. Bill's creator Walter Williams. This 30 minute video features all his friends set in the Play-Doh patriarch's home on Christmas Eve while taking on all the Yuletide standards. Suggested retail price is \$9.99.

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**All news items should be sent to our Associate Editor, Frankie Kowalski. Send e-mail to frankie@awn.com, fax to (213)464-5914, or by mail to: 6525 Sunset Bl., Garden Suite 10, Hollywood, CA 90028**



# Animation World Magazine 1996-97 Calendar

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In our next issue we look at international television. This includes a candid talk with Katherine Hricik at Nickelodeon, which has recently expanded into Europe and Australia. Speaking of Australia, we will get a behind-the-scenes look at that country's Energee Animation. We will also take a glimpse into the world of animation development as seen from an international perspective. We will also survey the new TV Fall line up in the United States.



In other matters, animator John Dilworth will review MTV's live-action/CGI feature, Joe's Apartment, Giannalberto Bendazzi will examine Icelandic animation, and we will report on what went on at this year's SIGGRAPH Conference in New Orleans.

IPolitics & Propaganda	(October)
Theme Park Animation	(November)
Interactive Animation	(December)
Animation Festivals	(January '97)
International Animation Industry	(February '97)
Children & Animation	(March '97)